

**Block**

# **4**

## **PARTICIPATION IN INTERACTIVE MEDIA**

### **UNIT 13**

**Participation in Media Systems**

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### **UNIT 14**

**Political Participation and Digital Media**

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### **UNIT 15**

**Film Genres and Storytelling**

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### **UNIT 13**

**Advertising Literacy**

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## BLOCK 4 INTRODUCTION

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In the previous Blocks, we discussed the nature of media, how to access media and information, and the ability to critically understand media content. Let's move on to the last and most important dimension of media literacy—engaging with the media. Participating in the communication system and, more importantly, participating with a purpose are the core focal points of this Block. We contextualise this Block from the individual's abilities and opportunities in the contemporary digital environment.

**Unit 13: Participation in Media Systems.** In this Unit, we explore the fusion of media and information systems in the modern 'Information society,' where information is both currency and culture. From the traditional mediums of films, television, and newspapers to the expansive realms of social media and the Internet, we dissect how these platforms shape our understanding of the world and facilitate the exchange of ideas. We investigate the evolving role of audiences, transitioning from passive consumers to active participants, and the emergence of prosumers and participatory cultures. Focusing on citizen journalism, we analyse the various forms of participatory culture and media while examining the ethical responsibilities inherent in our interactions with social media.

**Unit 14 Political Participation and Digital Media.** This Unit explores the fusion of political participation and digital media. In this Unit, you will understand the diverse avenues through which citizens engage in political discourse, both online and offline. We'll dissect the dimensions of political participation, from traditional forms to the dynamic landscape of online activism. By examining digital media tools, we'll uncover how platforms like social media and online petitions empower individuals to shape political agendas and mobilise communities. Additionally, we'll analyse the evolving role of the digital public sphere in fostering political debates and influencing public opinion. Throughout our exploration, we'll emphasise the importance of media and information literacy as a prerequisite for meaningful political participation in the digital age.

**Unit 15: Film Genres and Storytelling.** In this Unit, we explore the captivating realm of cinema, dissecting its structure, grammar, and storytelling techniques. From the evolution of visual entertainment to the modern-day influence of social media, we unravel the intricacies of film production and its impact on audience expectations. Through an in-depth analysis of various genres and their stereotypes, we decipher the codes and conventions that shape cinematic narratives. Furthermore, you will understand the art of scriptwriting and storyboarding, equipping you with the tools to craft compelling visual stories. Whether you're an aspiring filmmaker, a passionate cinephile, or simply curious about the magic of cinema, this Unit offers a comprehensive understanding of film as both an art form and a medium of communication.

**Unit 16: Advertising Literacy.** Advertising, a cornerstone of commercial communication, promotes products, services, and societal messages. Despite

criticisms of time and resource consumption, understanding advertising's intricacies is essential for aspiring professionals. Throughout this Unit, we explore its evolution, objectives, advantages, and limitations, spanning various media channels from print to online platforms. We dissect advertising techniques, appeals, and communication processes, equipping you with critical analysis skills. Embracing advertising literacy, we decode complex messages, fostering a deeper appreciation for their societal impact. By integrating previous coursework insights, you'll navigate the advertising landscape adeptly and confidently, planning and evaluating strategies.

Media literacy's ultimate goal is to make any individual a responsible citizen and enable them to engage with other institutions to better democratic systems. This course will give you a holistic understanding of media literacy and empower you individually.



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## UNIT 13 PARTICIPATION IN MEDIA SYSTEMS

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### 13.0 INTRODUCTION

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An 'Information society' is one in which information creation, distribution, diffusion, use, and manipulation is a significant economic, political and cultural activity (Webster, 1995). The processes and systems that combine media and information-gathering mechanisms for collecting and disseminating information and ideas are known as media and information systems. On the one hand, we have media such as films, television, newspapers and books to gain information about the world. On the other hand, we have social media and the Internet to disseminate our ideas, exchange our thoughts, and comment on relevant issues. These, along with companies, institutions and organisations engaged in manufacturing, transmitting and exchanging information in all forms (cartoons, videos, printed word, pictures, PowerPoint slides, audio, etc.), comprise our media and information systems.

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### 13.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

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After completing this Unit, you should be able to:

- Understand how audience roles have evolved in media and information systems;
- Describe the characteristics of prosumers and participatory culture;
- Identify different forms of participatory media, such as citizen journalism;
- Analyse the changing relationship between audiences and media, focusing on social media ethics; and
- Summarise key concepts related to participation in media and information systems.

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## 13.2 CHANGING PROFILE OF AUDIENCE

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Media and information systems play a vital role in this networked society. They are crucial agents for making sense of one's environment, seeking desired information and facilitating complete participation in activities around ourselves. Social media platforms have recently emerged as a base for obtaining and sharing most of our information. Not only is new media changing the way we interact with our surroundings, but it is also dictating 'how' we do it. It facilitates sharing in several ways, including text, video, pictures, graphs, illustrations, audio, etc., asking users to engage with the online content more deeply and uniquely.

### 13.2.1 Active and Passive Audience

Once defined as unidirectional or passive receivers of media messages, the audience/user has become an active media content producer. Schäfer (2010) mentions that media and information manufacturing industries have now provided new options to enhance the participation of users taking on the role of 'extended cultural industries'. However, this participation may be explicit or implicit. While an implicit participant merely uses sites for leisure and work, the explicit participant forms a community to co-create content (Schäfer, 2010, as cited in Pistone, pg. 16).

This means they are actively producing content by either creating or forwarding information. A passive audience receives media messages and gets affected by them but does not react to the content in any way. On the other hand, an active audience constantly revisits media content to make new meanings, point out contradictions, express dissent or disagreement, and provide feedback to media content creators. The media content creation and delivery process has become instantaneous, and so can provide feedback. Thus, even users who do not maintain social media pages or are not frequent users of new media interact with content by providing feedback through opinion polls, voting for their favourite reality show contestants, etc.

### 13.2.2 Changing Role of Audience in New Media Landscape

The traditional media brought an organised gatekeeping and editorial process that demarcated news, opinion, and editorial. With the advent of new media, traditional media began to be considered anti-democratic and non-participatory. This new media offers interactivity, decentralisation, ubiquity,

media convergence, and non-linear representation of information in a non-hierarchical manner.

Though the new media did a good job widening the public sphere and enabling readers to engage with and comment upon information and news coming their way, they have failed miserably in ensuring information's accuracy, credibility, and authenticity.

The direction of communication has changed from top-down to both horizontal and vertical. Avenues for individual expression co-exist with space for social representation. This new space is more democratic and is believed to enhance participation from all sectors of society. The content generated by users pushes them from the traditional domain of consumer to 'prosumer' (producer + consumer), where they are generating and consuming information at the same time. They are individuals simultaneously involved in both producing and consuming information and media. Prosumers can now locate, dissect, associate, replicate, co-produce and share media and information with the sender and among themselves.

The consumer must be able to make sense of all this information and the pitfalls of online communication. As more citizens come online and rely on social media for news, it becomes imperative to equip them with the skills to become digital natives. They need skills to deal with demassification, glocalization, hyperreality, fake news, propaganda, misinformation, and post-truth.

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### 13.3 PROSUMERS AND PARTICIPATORY CULTURE

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Ideas about the consumer becoming a producer due to the coming of electric technology were first put forward by Marshall McLuhan and Nevitt (1972). However, Alvin Toffler coined the word 'prosumer' in his seminal work 'The Third Wave'. The posts, pictures, texts, videos and information put up by users on the Internet are known as User Generated Content (UGC). The coming of Web 2.0 added functionalities for the users and created avenues for participation, and a new 'participatory culture' has emerged. Jenkins et al. (2009) state that " a participatory culture is emerging as the culture absorbs and responds to the explosion of new media technologies that make it possible for average consumers to archive, annotate, appropriate and re-circulate media content in powerful new ways" (pg. 8).

Participatory culture is the one that encourages all members of society to engage with the media in ways that are comfortable for them. Few barriers exist to artistic expression and civic engagement in a participatory culture. Users are encouraged to share their creations and collaborate with other individuals. The common examples of such a space are sites such as Facebook, YouTube, etc. (and other social networking sites) that rely upon users to create and share information. The creator of Facebook controls the flow, not the content. Wikipedia is another such site where all of the data is created and modified by readers. E-commerce sites rely upon users to sell and buy products.

### 13.3.1 Understanding Participatory Systems

However, the participatory system has a few characteristics that set it apart from traditional top-down 'culture industries' (Huybrechts, 2014).

- Both makers and participants work with different disciplines, consciously exiting their comfort zone.
- This may not necessarily be true for products made by 'culture industries' because they work in a set paradigm with fixed conventions and rules oriented towards 'mass culture' instead of the 'demassification' that the producers strive to obtain.
- Makers are consciously handing over part of the control, as their ideas can be discussed, adapted and even changed by participants.
- The producers know their content could be replicated as memes, mash-ups, or other forms. However, they are open to experimentation and ideas even if they radically alter the original product. This differs from traditional media, where all information is presented through a structured, rigid, and hierarchical protocol.
- The project is open to a larger group of potential participants, and the best way to address and involve this audience in the process has not been known from the beginning.
- Participatory projects are developed within a network and thus have to deal with the expectations and opinions of several subjects.
- There is no clear separation between makers and participants, as they are all actors in the same process.

### 13.3.2 Characteristics of Prosumers

As more and more prosumers create content, the old structures of content creation are being challenged continuously. Content, like other things, has moved on from customization to co-creation. Axel Bruns defines this *"collaborative and continuous building and extending of existing content in pursuit of further improvement"* as 'produsage' (2006; 2008). Tapscott and Williams (2006) use the term "prosumption" (production/consumption) to describe the activities of prosumers. Some characteristics are unique to prosumption (Pistone, pg 8).

#### 1) Dominance of User-led content production

With the enhanced capabilities offered by new media, there has been a rapid increase in the number of websites allowing products (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.). There has also been an increase in collaboration-friendly sites such as wikis and games such as Second Life that permit building upon the original structures.

#### 2) Collaborative engagement

Even new cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin work on a collaboration model where each participant has significant and unique contributions to



make. Users are encouraged to share real-time information and use open-source software.

### 3) Palimpsest development

The stories on new media come through with instant updates, allowing users to build a timeline and see the content being developed, modified and represented. This feature is special because, in traditional media, one can only see the story's final form delivered to us. A prosumer is thus more engaged and invested in the information process.

### 4) Alternative approaches to intellectual property

With new media's expanding and pervading nature, sustaining and ensuring the protection of Copyrights and royalties became difficult. Thus, new types of licences, such as Creative Commons, were created to democratise the new space while simultaneously creating a system to acknowledge the contributions of prosumers.

### 5) Heterarchical structure

Prosumers across the spectrum are given equal value and importance regardless of the actual worth of their contributions. This system ensures that all contributors are simultaneously leaders and participants.

#### Activity – 1

Find out and list any four projects/websites that are collaborative/participatory.

List the licences available with Creative Commons.

### Check Your Progress: 2

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1. What is participatory culture, and what are its characteristics?

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 .....  
 .....

2. What are the characteristics of presumption?

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## 13.4 PARTICIPATORY OPTIONS OF USERS

### 13.4.1 Forms of Participatory Culture

There are many ways in which prosumers can participate as citizens. All prosumers have opportunities to participate in citizen engagement, production of media and creating 'culture' (Schäfer, 2010). Jenkins et al.

mention the following forms of participatory culture:-

- Affiliations — formal and informal memberships in online communities centred around various forms of media, such as Friendster, Facebook, message boards, metagaming, game clans, or MySpace).
- Expressions — producing new creative forms, such as digital sampling, skinning and modding, fan video making, fan fiction writing, zines, and mash-ups).
- Collaborative Problem-solving — working in formal and informal teams to complete tasks and develop new knowledge (such as through Wikipedia, alternative reality gaming, and spoiling).
- Circulations — Shaping media flow (such as podcasting and blogging). (as cited in Jenkins et al., pg. 3)

Participatory culture has significant ramifications for a democratic society. Over the past few years, there has been a significant rise in participatory or citizen journalism.

### 13.4.2 Types of Participatory Media (Citizen Journalism)

Bowman & Willis (2003) define participatory journalism as the act of a citizen, or group of citizens, playing an active role in collecting, reporting, analysing and disseminating news and information. This participation intends to provide independent, reliable, accurate, wide-ranging and relevant information that a democracy requires (pg 9). Brown mentions (1997), "In an era when anyone can be a reporter or commentator on the Web, 'you move to a two-way journalism.' The journalist becomes a 'forum leader' or a mediator rather than simply a teacher or lecturer. The audience becomes not consumers, but 'prosumers,' a hybrid of consumer and producer."

Participatory journalism happens when any ordinary person, as a citizen of a nation, takes the initiative to express ideas irrespective of his educational or professional background. It is an act of citizens actively collecting, reporting, analysing, and disseminating news and information.

Lasica (2003) has specified many types of participatory journalism:-

1. Audience participation (such as user comments attached to news stories, personal blogs, photographs or video footage captured from personal mobile cameras, or local news written by community residents). E.g.:- ohmynews.com, CGNet Swara, Gramvaani and the hyper-local newspaper Khabar Lahariya
2. Independent news and information Websites (altnews.in, wikileaks.com)
3. Full-fledged participatory news sites (Citizen Matters, 'Fair Observer')
4. Collaborative and contributory media sites (Slashdot, Merinews, Youthkiawaaz, Newsvine)
5. Other kinds of "thin media" (mailing lists, email newsletters)
6. Personal broadcasting sites (video broadcast sites such as KenRadio)

**Activity - 2**

Identify presumption activities you do during the day and list them with the type.

**Check Your Progress: 3**

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1. What are the different forms of participatory culture?

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2. Explain various types of participatory media.

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3. What is citizen journalism?

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### **13.5 CITIZEN JOURNALISM AND EMPOWERED AUDIENCE/USER**

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The enhancement in technology has facilitated citizens to speak their minds even when traditional media outlets do not support their narratives by giving time to their issues/stories. They use social media to communicate their views and facts using simple technology such as cell phones. Videos/photographs and tweets from citizens have become primetime news topics. This is especially prevalent in remote areas or strife-torn regions that are inaccessible for long periods. The news content is predominantly urban-centric. With the increasing alienation citizens face, they have resorted to using social media to broadcast their views or facts that have been reported otherwise. Mainstream media outlets also rely upon these to compensate for the lack of time, resources, and logistics to cover the last mile in reporting.

Though readers earlier interacted with media through avenues such as Letter to the Editor, those letters were more reactive rather than participative. Today, videos and posts from readers/viewers form the basis of editorial decisions about coverage and airtime. Viewers are quick to refute any false claims and point out misreporting. So, the 'watchdog' of democracy now has a 'watchdog' for itself.

Many features set participatory media apart from mainstream media. While mainstream media has a typical, hierarchical, gatekeeping model for

selection, editing and publishing stories, participatory media does not have any such structure for gatekeeping. Citizen journalism is carried out by untrained participants who may or may not be educated or technically sound, while media persons are often trained in camera, recording, editing, etc. A regular media outlet publishes/ airs only the final version and selected story, thereby not giving information regarding all issues received by the organisation/media outlet and no justification for rejection/omission of certain issues. In participatory journalism, the stories are put in the public domain, where other members annotate, edit, build upon and share stories. The members do not need to choose or omit any stories as they do not have professional constraints.

Media relies upon the packaging of news using videos/pictures/audio and infographics. In contrast, news posted by citizens is raw. It allows users to participate in its production through commentaries, annotations, filtering and editing, fact-checking, grassroots reporting, peer-review and open-source reporting and broadcasting their version of events through tweets, audio and video. Since media outlets work under many constraints, they deal with issues of accessibility and other limitations (e.g.:- inability to contact local authorities and verify claims) at the site of stories (Eg:-floods, riots, etc.) and paucity of resources for coverage such as opposed to the citizen journalist who reports from grassroots as he/she has access to the site of the incident in a much better way. They use any/all technologies present to air the news and reduce the time and complexity of the news presented, as it does not need to go through traditional gatekeeping. The resulting news is not very structured and polished but is 'straight from ground zero'.

Mainstream media outlets have started recognizing the power of citizen journalism and the challenges it poses. Participatory media has brought about deeper democratisation of media, so much so that it is loosely referred to as the 'fifth' pillar of democracy (the fourth being mainstream media). The hegemony of mainstream media is now facing a real challenge. News organisations must now be serious about upholding values such as accuracy, credibility, and story sourcing. The agendas earlier set by mainstream media are now challenged, and members of the public question expert opinions. The skills of journalists need to be sharper and flexible enough to adjust to this new type of participatory journalism ecosystem. Mainstream media must maintain its presence and popularity in real and virtual worlds while remaining competitive, profitable and adaptive.

**Activity - 3**

Mention four examples of citizen journalism that have created a difference in society.

**Check Your Progress: 4**

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1. How has citizen journalism impacted traditional media?

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## 13.6 AUDIENCE AND THEIR CHANGING RELATIONSHIP WITH MEDIA

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### 13.6.1 Social Media as a Site for Citizen Journalism

In the initial years of news in India, mainstream news outlets were the source of information for social media and other online news portals. However, with technological advancements, social media is fed stories as they are broadcast and even before broadcast most of the time. Breaking news has shifted from TV to the online domain due to the participatory nature of the Internet. Often, unverified stories go viral on social media, resulting in them being picked up by mainstream news outlets. Sometimes, these go on air without going through the traditional newsroom grind. This can be attributed to several factors, such as the absence of the traditional gate-keeping model in the news coming out of social media, the tendency to share information without fact-checking and the lack of responsibility regarding accuracy from the end of readers and content creators. Fake news, misinformation and propaganda are an even bigger threat in this day and age.

Misleading videos going viral have resulted in brutal mob lynching incidents and have caused communal flare-ups needlessly. In the year 2018, over 12 people died in mob lynching incidents after they were falsely accused of being child lifters, sexual offenders and cow slaughterers on social media. In November 2016, WhatsApp messages regarding salt shortage triggered a four-fold price rise and panic buying, leading to chaos and looting of grocery shops. Videos of two Bangladeshi men being assaulted were re-circulated on Facebook in an entirely new context as the video of a Hindu being killed by Muslims (Sharma, 2018). The accompanying text was false, misleading and directed towards inciting violence. Many such texts have been circulated recently.

Children as young as eight have become victims of deadly suicide games such as the 'Blue whale'. Challenge videos that ask viewers to pull off stunts or do the impossible keep surfacing regularly (Ice bucket challenge, #kikichallenge). Suicides and murders have been live-streamed on Facebook.

The danger of breach of privacy and sharing of our private data by social media companies has presented itself many times, as in the case of the recent Cambridge Analytica- Facebook scandal. Facebook was accused of sharing the private data of its members with Cambridge Analytica without obtaining their consent. The companies often dictate the terms of service and privacy policies per their requirement, and readers have little or no say in changing them. They are also unaware of their virtual identities and how data mining

firms use them.

Similarly, other social networking sites often collect and share information with third-party users. However, we cannot control this since failure to accept these policies often results in the inability to sign up or access these sites and applications. Thus, we reveal much more about ourselves online than planned simply because we do not care to go through the privacy settings or disclosure agreements when downloading apps or accessing social media.

The least users can do is read and understand these carefully, limiting the amount and type of personal information they upload. The increasing cyber disinhibition, or the loosening of social restrictions and inhibitions in the virtual world, is a major cause of ethical and legal violations.

The government has stepped in and is trying to bring accountability by making social media platforms share the responsibility for content posted on them. They are also mulling a Data Protection law that empowers citizens to have complete control over the data they post. This results from unfettered participation opportunities that social media offers its prosumers. However, as the space becomes more and more open for all, the onus of protecting oneself from online crimes while fully participating in the information society also falls upon the prosumer.

Much content is being created online, and it is important that the Internet remains open and transparent and protects the rights of individuals contributing to sharing and exchanging knowledge. This allows them to create content freely and fosters creativity while making knowledge accessible to everyone. The temptation to copy or modify easily available content is difficult to fight. Ownership, privacy, confidentiality, and intellectual property must be respected in virtual life, just like in real life.

Collaborative websites such as Wikis and YouTube and social media sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Weibo, and Twitter all run with the help of user-generated content. Individuals who read the content also share, exchange, add, and publish the data they come across, thus becoming consumers and producers. This is unlike any other medium. For example, we use Facebook to share and 'like' pictures found on our friends' walls, creating data.

Thus, new media users must be protected from ethical violations as producers and creators of information. Let us first try to understand their responsibilities as creators.

### **13.6.2 Understanding Social Media Rights and Ethics**

Digital Rights have become very important in this information age. The rights of the content creator and the consumer or reader must be protected. There are many challenges here, as Internet consumers are mostly prosumers. They must watch out for ethical violations as creators and consumers of online content. Since establishing ownership is easier, the content creator's rights are always discussed more fervently.

## Copyright Infringement

Many websites are offering paid content online. This is done to ensure that artists/writers who are contributing content are compensated and motivated to contribute further. However, some file-sharing companies allow illegal downloading and sharing of files, which leads to piracy. The rampant music piracy, or copying digital goods such as audio files, videos, reports, articles, and so on, without the consent of the person who holds the copyright, is a major problem. As users, we tend to become careless about copying and pasting desired information, and sometimes, we inadvertently infringe on fellow netizens' copyrights.

## Open Content Vs Free Content

David Wiley has specified that online content can be open or free. It is important to distinguish between the two. Any online content that can be accessed, revised, reused, redistributed, remixed and retained for later use is called open content. This means the online content need not be open even if it is free, implying that free content is not the same as 'open' content. Free means one can access the content free of cost, but 'open' means users are free to download, edit, and share the content without any ethical or legal limitations.

The problem of creating ethical guidelines for the Internet has risen because it is a relatively new medium. A vast amount of content is floating around on the Internet, and many conventions define our ethical boundaries concerning using online content. The automatic copyright of the online content lasts 70 years and becomes available for public use. However, new types of online copyright licensing now tell us how a particular content should be used. Creative Commons is one such organisation that works on providing people access to creative work and intellectual property while giving them the right to choose the conditions for making that work available to consumers.

In simple terms, whenever a user posts fresh information online, he/she can specify how it has to be used by mentioning whether the material is free for modification/download/sharing, etc., or partly available/ not available. This is done via symbols and attributions now commonly used on the Internet. Apart from legal considerations, there are many ethical issues that new media users must be aware of.

### 13.6.3 Social Media Ethics

Ethics are moral codes of conduct. They define how we behave online and help us decide about our 'netiquettes'. Social media ethics can be defined as ethical considerations defining our online conduct. They tell us how to appropriately use the new media without breaching any law or infringing on the online rights of other users. They provide a model code of conduct for creators, distributors and users of online content.

The guideline for good 'netiquette' is very simple. When we post something about a text, we should point to the original text while commenting so that our post is not taken out of context. We must be careful while posting any

data online. Before doing it, one must consider the long-term consequences. We should be mindful of different types of readers online. They may represent different beliefs, sensibilities and cultures. Hence, we should respect that. In case we have committed a mistake, we must immediately apologise and remove the concerned text from where it was posted. We should be gracious in disagreements also. Expressing any negative opinion online on a public forum can be disturbing for any individual. (<http://infosecawareness.in/students/internet-ethics> )

The foremost thing is to double-check the data we post online and be critical, observant, and watchful while sharing content or talking to strangers. We should also encourage our acquaintances and friends to point out any errors or mistakes we might have committed.

As new media users, we must understand the constantly changing online world and learn how to deal with emerging ethical challenges. We must also create policies to ensure no conflict of interest between content creators and online consumers. Users also need to be more aware of new crimes being committed online.

Most importantly, we must be aware of new media ethics and willing participants in making the Internet more productive, responsible, and happy for all users.

**Activity – 4**  
Mention any recent ethical violations on social media and cite ways to prevent or improve the situation.

**Check Your Progress: 5**

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1. What is the difference between Free and Open content? What is Creative Commons?

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2. What do you understand about social media ethics?

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**13.7 LET US SUM UP**

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An 'Information society' is one in which information creation, distribution, diffusion, use, and manipulation is a significant economic, political and



cultural activity (Webster, 1995). The processes and systems that combine media and information-gathering mechanisms for collecting and disseminating information and ideas are known as media and information systems. Media and information systems play a vital role in this networked society. They are crucial agents for making sense of one's environment, seeking desired information and facilitating complete participation in activities around ourselves.

Once defined as unidirectional or passive receivers of media messages, the audience/user has become an active media content producer. The direction of communication has changed from top-down to both horizontal and vertical. The content generated by users pushes them from the traditional domain of consumer to 'prosumer' (producer + consumer), where they are generating and consuming information at the same time. Participatory culture is the one that encourages all members of society to engage with the media in ways that are comfortable for them. Few barriers exist to artistic expression and civic engagement in a participatory culture. Users are encouraged to share their creations and collaborate with other individuals. As more and more prosumers create content, the old structures of content creation are being challenged continuously. Tapscott and Williams (2006) use the term "prosumption" (production/consumption) to describe the activities of prosumers. Some characteristics are unique to production.

Bowman & Willis (2003) define participatory journalism as the act of a citizen, or group of citizens, playing an active role in collecting, reporting, analysing and disseminating news and information. This participation intends to provide independent, reliable, accurate, wide-ranging and relevant information that a democracy requires. As new media users, we must understand the constantly changing online world and learn how to deal with emerging ethical challenges. We must also create policies to ensure no conflict of interest between content creators and online consumers. The users need to be more aware of new crimes being committed online. Most importantly, we need to be aware of new media ethics and be willing participants in making the Internet more productive, responsible, and happy for all users.

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## 13.8 KEYWORDS

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**Ubiquitous:** Present, appearing, or found everywhere.

**Demassification** Refers to restructuring the media industry into smaller independent operating entities. It means breaking (something standardised or homogeneous) into elements that appeal to individual tastes or special interests, e.g., to demassify the magazine industry into special-interest periodicals.

**Media convergence:** A phenomenon involving the interconnection of computing, communication, and content—and is a direct consequence of the digitization of media content and the popularisation of the Internet. Media convergence transforms established industries, services, and work practices and enables entirely new forms of content to emerge. It erodes the long-

established media industry and content "silos" and increasingly uncouples content from particular devices.

**Glocalization:** Products or services designed to benefit a local market while being developed and distributed globally. Glocalization is a mixture of and the result of combining globalisation and localization.

**Post-truth:** Relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief

**Misinformation:** False or inaccurate information, especially that which is deliberately intended to deceive

**Fake news:** False, often sensational, information disseminated under the guise of news reporting

**Hyper-reality** is defined as the inability of consciousness to distinguish reality from a simulation of reality, especially in technologically advanced postmodern societies. It is a state in which real and fiction are seamlessly blended, so there is no clear distinction between where one ends and the other begins.

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### 13.9 FURTHER READINGS

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## 13.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

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### Check Your Progress: 1

1. A passive audience receives media messages and is affected by them but does not react to the content in any way. On the other hand, an active audience constantly revisits media content to make new meanings, point out contradictions, express dissent or disagreement, and provide feedback to media content creators.
2. Traditional media brought an organised gatekeeping and editorial process that demarcated news, opinion, and editorial. With the advent of new media, traditional media began to be considered anti-democratic and non-participatory. This new media offers interactivity, decentralisation, ubiquity, media convergence, and non-linear representation of information in a non-hierarchical manner.
3. They are individuals simultaneously involved in both producing and consuming information and media. Prosumers can now locate, dissect, associate, replicate, co-produce and share media and information with the sender and among themselves.

### Check Your Progress: 2

1. Jenkins et al. (2009) state that " a participatory culture is emerging as the culture absorbs and responds to the explosion of new media technologies that make it possible for average consumers to archive, annotate, appropriate and re-circulate media content in powerful new ways" (pg. 8). The characteristics are:
  - Both makers and participants work with different disciplines, consciously exiting their comfort zone.
  - Makers are consciously handing over part of the control, as their ideas can be discussed, adapted and even changed by participants.
  - The project is open to a larger group of potential participants, and

the best way to address and involve this audience in the process has not been known from the beginning.

- Participatory projects are developed within a network and thus have to deal with the expectations and opinions of several subjects.
- There is no clear separation between makers and participants, as they are all actors in the same process.

2. Presumption Characteristics:

- Dominance of User-led content production
- Collaborative engagement
- Palimpsest development
- Alternative approaches to intellectual property
- Heterarchical structure

**Check Your Progress: 3**

1. Forms of participatory culture:-

- Affiliations — formal and informal memberships in online communities centred around various forms of media, such as Friendster, Facebook, message boards, metagaming, game clans, or MySpace).
- Expressions — producing new creative forms, such as digital sampling, skinning and modding, fan video making, fan fiction writing, zines, and mash-ups).
- Collaborative Problem-solving — working in formal and informal teams to complete tasks and develop new knowledge (such as through Wikipedia, alternative reality gaming, and spoiling).
- Circulations — Shaping media flow (such as podcasting and blogging).

2. Types of participatory media

- Audience participation (such as user comments attached to news stories, personal blogs, photographs or video footage captured from personal mobile cameras, or local news written by community residents). E.g.:- ohmynews.com, CGNet Swara, Gramvaani and the hyper-local newspaper Khabar Lahariya
- Independent news and information Websites (altnews.in, wikileaks.com)
- Full-fledged participatory news sites (Citizen Matters, 'Fair Observer')
- Collaborative and contributory media sites (Slashdot, Merinews, Youthkiawaaz, Newsvine)
- Other kinds of "thin media" (mailing lists, email newsletters)
- Personal broadcasting sites (video broadcast sites such as KenRadio)

3. Citizen journalism is the act of a citizen or group of citizens playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analysing, and

disseminating news and information. This participation intends to provide independent, reliable, accurate, wide-ranging and relevant information that a democracy requires

#### **Check Your Progress: 4**

1. Impact of Citizen Journalism on traditional media – Mainstream media outlets have started recognizing the power of citizen journalism and the challenges it poses. Participatory media has brought about deeper democratisation of media, so much so that it is loosely referred to as the 'fifth' pillar of democracy (the fourth being mainstream media). The hegemony of mainstream media is now facing a real challenge. News organisations must now be serious about upholding values such as accuracy, credibility, and story sourcing. The agendas earlier set by mainstream media are now challenged, and members of the public question expert opinions. The skills of journalists need to be sharper and flexible enough to adjust to this new type of participatory journalism ecosystem. Mainstream media must maintain its presence and popularity in real and virtual worlds while remaining competitive, profitable and adaptive.

#### **Check Your Progress: 5**

1. Open and Free Content:- David Wiley has specified that online content can be open or free. It is important to distinguish between the two. Any online content that can be accessed, revised, reused, redistributed, remixed and retained for later use is called open content. This means the online content need not be open even if it is free, implying that free content is not the same as 'open' content. Free means one can access the content free of cost, but 'open' means users are free to download, edit, and share the content without any ethical or legal limitations.
2. Social media ethics can be defined as ethical considerations governing our online conduct. They tell us how to appropriately use new media without breaching any law or infringing on the online rights of other users. They provide a model code of conduct for creators, distributors, and online content users.

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## UNIT 14 POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND DIGITAL MEDIA

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### Structure

- 14.0 Introduction
- 14.1 Learning Outcomes
- 14.2 Conceptual Understanding of Political Participation
  - 14.2.1 Dimensions of Political Participation
  - 14.2.2 Online Political Participation
- 14.3 Digital Media Tools for Participation
- 14.4 Digital Public Sphere and Political Debates
- 14.5 Democracy and Digital Media
- 14.6 Citizenship and Participation
- 14.7 Media and Information Literacy (MIL): A Prerequisite for Political Participation
  - 14.7.1 Discussion on Components
  - 14.7.2 Indian Context
- 14.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 14.8 Further Readings
- 14.10 Check Your Progress: Possible Answers

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### 14.0 INTRODUCTION

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The term "political participation" encompasses a broad range of actions citizens take to express their political beliefs, influence public policy, and support the democratic process. The extensive availability of the Internet in the modern era has tremendously improved people's capacity to participate in political processes. Internet-based applications have shown that they can motivate millions of individuals to take part in political processes that have real-world consequences.

When individuals participate in their political system online or offline, they engage in individual and collective actions, occupying new levels of socio-political interaction. The proliferation of digital ecosystems has simplified political participation, catapulting the Media and Information Literacy (MIL) into the sphere of political culture. The ultimate goal of MIL in this setting is to strengthen ties between the state and the people.

The digital age information system makes available a plethora of data about political problems, candidates, parties, and government policies. Users can easily access a wide range of information, including news, analysis, and multiple points of view, allowing them to enlighten themselves better and make sound choices, thus being politically included in society. To achieve the objective of political inclusion, citizens must have easy access to information and political agencies that encourage them to participate in

policy making indirectly, influence the enforcement of laws, evaluate the performance of our government, and assist others in doing the same.

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## 14.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

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After completing this Unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the basics of political participation in both traditional and digital contexts;
- Explore how digital media tools are used for political engagement;
- Examine how digital platforms influence political debates;
- Investigate the relationship between democracy and digital media; and
- Enhance media and information literacy for effective political participation.

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## 14.2 CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

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Van Deth (2014) defined political participation as "citizens' activities affecting politics". Citizens' participation is very important for democratic decision-making, and this has led to a significant increase in the study of political participation during the past few decades. Participation in politics involves a wide range of actions that allow people to have their voices heard, shape policy that affects their daily lives, and shape the world around them. Beginning with a heavy emphasis on voting and electoral engagement in the 1940s and 1950s, the repertoire of ways to acquire influence has expanded lately to include actions like signing petitions, blocking traffic, donating money, and even fighting with the police.

### 14.2.1 Dimensions of Political Participation

Traditional studies of citizen involvement in politics have centred on voting. However, contemporary conceptions of political participation have expanded to encompass a broader range of activities. Brady (1999) defined political engagement as ordinary citizens' actions intended to influence some political outcomes. Verba and Nie (1972) described participation in four typologies: voting, campaign activity for political parties, contact with public officials, and cooperative or communal activities related to local communities. A more comprehensive typology, including five dimensions, was proposed by Teorell et al. (2007). According to them, political participation is the act of voting, consumer participation (e.g. donating money, boycotting products, and buying political products), involvement with political parties (e.g. working for, volunteering with, or financially supporting a political party), participation in protest activities (e.g. demonstrations, strikes, and other forms of protest), and contact activity (e.g. reaching out to groups including organisations, politicians, and government officials). More recently, Ekman and Amnå's (2012) presentation distinguished between latent and manifest political participation.

**Table 1. Latent and manifest forms of political participation ( Ekman & Amna, 2012)**

Latent political participation		Manifest political participation		
Involvement (attention)	Civic engagement (action)	Formal political participation	Activism (extra-parliamentary participation)	
Individual forms				
			Legal	Illegal
Interest in politics and social issues  Keeping watch on current political events	Activities are based on a person's interest and focus on politics and societal concerns.	Election involvement and contact activities	To make one's voice known or to make a difference by personal methods (such as signing petitions or political consumption) through extra-parliamentary forms of participation.	Individually committed unlawful acts with a political motivation
Collective forms				
A feeling of membership in a group or collective with a distinct political profile or agenda.  Lifestyle-related politics (for instance, identity, clothing, music, cuisine, and values)	Volunteer work is done outside of one's family and close circle of friends to enhance conditions in the local community, for charity, or to assist others.	Membership in conventional political parties, trade unions, and other organisations	Network-based political participation, e.g. new social movements, demonstrations, strikes, and protests	Protests and illegal and violent activities: Conflicts with the police or political opponents include protests, rioting, squatting, property destruction, and confrontations.

Only through latent forms of participation can new political behaviours and the chances for political involvement in various countries be comprehended, as Ekman and Amnå (2012) stated.



## 14.2.2 Online Political Participation

The Internet has enabled new types of mediated political engagement, thus broadening the scope of political participation. Such new online forms of participation raised hopes for a stronger engagement of politically underrepresented demographics like women, ethnic minorities, youth, the less educated, and low-income individuals.

Online political participation can be psychological (psychological engagement in politics using digital media) or behavioural (online political behaviours: attending civic events online, contacting officials online, volunteering online, or working in online campaigns). Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) define political participation as psychological and behavioural involvement in civic and public affairs with the clear expectation of influencing government actions. Gibson and Cantijoch (2013) identified types of online and offline participation: passive engagement consists of news attention, discussion, and the expressive mode, whereas active participation includes voting, party or campaign activities, protest activities, contacting, communal actions, and consumerism.

Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have evolved into potent instruments for online political engagement. Users can get their voices heard, disseminate political content, discuss contemporary topics, and make meaningful connections with others who share their views. People can band together for a common cause or a political campaign using online communities and grassroots movements made possible by social media. People can organise and sign online petitions to lobby for policy changes or support certain causes on digital media platforms. It is possible to influence policymakers by circulating and collecting signatures for these petitions. Political dialogues and debates on digital media platforms can now be held across geographic boundaries. Sharing opinions, posing questions, and conversing with others are all possible through internet forums, comment sections, and live streaming. Discussions like these help people learn more about politics, develop critical thinking skills, and affect public opinion.

Two main categories describe how an individual participates in politics via digital media. The three categories are:

- i) **Passive engagement:** An individual is exposed to information related to political affairs but is not compelled to take any kind of action.
- ii) **Active participation** means doing something to make a difference in the political system.

To be more specific, three distinct types of political influence can be attained through political participation: influence over particular policies (primary influence), influence over the selection of public officials responsible for making these policies (secondary influence), and influence over the political preferences and behaviours of other citizens (tertiary influence).

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## 14.3 DIGITAL MEDIA TOOLS FOR PARTICIPATION

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Digital media tools encourage digital participation by providing platforms and resources facilitating engagement, collaboration, and information sharing. They enable people to contribute their voices, perspectives, and expertise to various political and civic discussions and activities, nurturing a more inclusive and participatory democratic landscape. Digital media tools for political participation include social media platforms, online forums and discussion boards, crowdsourcing platforms, petitions and campaigns, and mobile applications.

**Social media platforms:** Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram enable individuals to connect, share, and engage with a larger audience. These platforms permit users to voice their opinions, discuss political issues, and generate public debates.

Online forums and discussion boards provide virtual locations for individuals to engage in conversations, debates, and knowledge exchange. These platforms enable individuals to pose queries, share information, and discuss topics of particular interest. They facilitate the development of communities and the exchange of diverse viewpoints. For example, "Youth4work" is an online forum to discuss political issues.

**Crowdsourcing platforms:** Digital media tools facilitate crowdsourcing, in which individuals collectively contribute to a project or acquire information. Crowdsourcing platforms and initiatives enable individuals to report news, document events, and share local perspectives that conventional media outlets might not cover. This encourages citizen participation in shaping the narrative of the news. For example, we can mention "participial," a collaborative crowdsourcing project that tracks democratic innovation and public engagement across the globe.

**Online petitions and campaigns:** Platforms such as Change.org, Avaaz, and other similar websites permit individuals to create and sign online petitions, thereby raising awareness about particular issues and advocating for change. These platforms amplify individual voices, mobilise support, and allow citizens to communicate their concerns and advocate for policy change.

**Mobile applications:** Mobile applications are crucial in encouraging digital participation, especially in regions with high mobile penetration. Mobile applications can provide features such as digital government facilities, election information, and engagement platforms. These applications provide citizens with easy and accessible methods to participate in political processes via their smartphones. For example, the MyGov (India) mobile application is a citizen engagement platform.

### Activity 1

Creating an online political campaign

Create a unique hashtag related to a political topic you are interested in and use that hashtag in your social media posts to create awareness and encourage participation.

## 14.4 DIGITAL PUBLIC SPHERE AND POLITICAL DEBATES

An effective democracy demands a deliberative public sphere, an informal space for citizens to acquire information and communicate with one another to detect problems and bring them to the public's attention. The digital public sphere is the virtual space where people engage in public discourse, exchange ideas, and discuss various topics, including politics. It blurs the distinctions between professional journalists, politicians, and ordinary citizens. The digital public sphere significantly influences political debates by enhancing accessibility and amplifying voices. However, obstacles such as fragmentation, disinformation, and polarisation appear.

The features of digital public spheres are discussed as follows:

**Inclusion:** The digital public sphere has increased the accessibility and reach of political discussions. Online platforms and social media enable people from diverse backgrounds, locations, and social groups to engage in political discussions. It has democratised information access and facilitated interaction beyond traditional offline spaces.

**Voice amplification:** Digital media platforms enable individuals to amplify their voices and participate in political debates. Previously underrepresented or marginalised groups can now express their opinions, share their experiences, and challenge dominant narratives. This increased variety of perspectives contributes to a more inclusive and lively political discourse.

**Fragmentation and echo chambers:** While the digital public sphere enables a diversity of voices, it can also fragment political discourse. Online algorithms and personalised content delivery may generate echo chambers in which individuals are predominantly exposed to information and opinions supporting their beliefs. This can restrict exposure to diverse perspectives and impede productive political discourse.

**Disinformation and propaganda:** The digital public sphere has also witnessed the propagation of disinformation and the amplification of polarised perspectives. False information, propaganda, and misinformation can rapidly spread and influence political debates through social media. This threatens the quality and integrity of political discourse and necessitates critical media literacy skills for effectively navigating the online landscape.

**Influencing public opinion:** Digital platforms offer the opportunity to influence public opinion through political debates. Influencers, journalists, and opinion leaders can use digital media to share their perspectives, analyse

political events, and sway public opinion. Online conversations can influence public perception, affecting electoral outcomes and policy debates.

**Accountability:** The digital public sphere encourages citizen engagement and nurtures a sense of accountability among political actors. Citizens can express their concerns, hold politicians accountable, and demand transparency through online discussions. Public scrutiny in the digital space can increase political debates' transparency and responsiveness.

**Check Your Progress: 1**

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1. Explain the term "political participation" and discuss its significance in modern democratic societies. How has the availability of the Internet impacted political participation?

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2. What are the dimensions of political participation, and how do they manifest in both online and offline contexts?

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3. Discuss the role of digital media tools in facilitating political engagement. How do platforms like social media and online forums influence the dynamics of political participation?

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## **14.5 DEMOCRACY AND DIGITAL MEDIA**

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Individual political rights and liberties are at the heart of liberal democracy. According to cultural theory, democratic governance is supported by a culture in which all individuals can participate in social processes of meaning-making and access to diverse viewpoints (Balkin, 2015). The proliferation of online communication tools makes it easier for individuals to participate in politics. New kinds of political engagement and the role of digital media in making them possible are important lenses through which to view digital democracy. Young people are heavily represented and engaged online, especially on social media. Thus, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn are just a few examples of the many online communication channels that enable citizens to participate in public and political debates in the modern era.

Digital media has been perceived both as a threat to democracy and as a potential boon to citizen participation in government. Participation, political awareness, trust, polarisation, populism, and echo chambers are six elements that shift significantly with digital media usage and significantly impact democracy (Lorenz-Spreen et al., 2022). In many cases, the first two factors have a favourable impact, whereas the remaining factors hurt democracy. However, the political environment of a State is crucial to evaluating the components. In countries where democracy is still in its formative stages, such as South America, Africa, and Asia, the favourable effects of digital media on political involvement and information consumption were most obvious. There was more evidence of the negative impacts in the well-established democracies of Europe and the United States, such as rising populism polarisation and falling political trust.

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## **14.6 CITIZENSHIP AND PARTICIPATION**

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Voice, agency, and participation are transformed into meaningful experiences with citizenship status. To make participation more flexible, citizenship education is crucial. In an educational context, educational practice contributes to developing civic competencies, knowledge, and beliefs. After that, civic competencies give rise to political competencies. From the school learning stage onward, civic development concepts expand. Socio-political development theory explains that the civic development of students occurs in five steps: gaining knowledge (cognitive stage—social and emotional development) where social problems are introduced; logical skills where social problems are recognised; emotional abilities (capacity to contribute to social change) in the youth phase; political capabilities where youth learn to address problems civically; and social competencies where youth establish relationships. Citizens can contribute to decision-making when they acquire the skills to evaluate a problem from a civic and political perspective.

The strategic approach could be promoted at the community level to establish citizenship education, raise public awareness, and encourage participation from individuals of all ages. In the community context, citizenship education addresses civic literacy, diversity and intercultural understanding, environmental sustainability, democratic values, and human rights. Citizenship education must be inclusive of marginalised groups like minorities, expatriates, etc. Change agents such as the media, government, educational institutions, community centres, and libraries must promote it at the community level.

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## **14.7 MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY (MIL): A PREREQUISITE FOR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

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Media and information literacy empower citizens. Political participation enables citizens to actively engage with society's institutions and the public sphere, facilitating democratic participation in political activity.

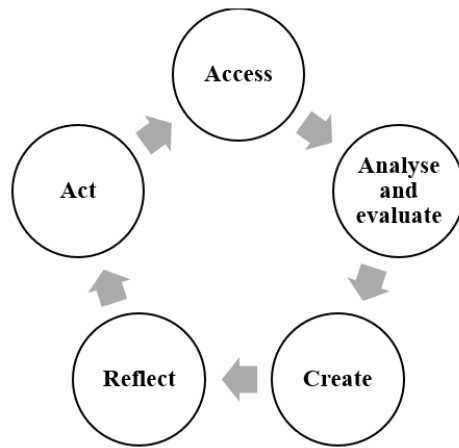
The four prerequisite conditions for political participation are mutually reinforcing factors:

- i) **Relevant knowledge and skills:** Individuals must possess pertinent information. The knowledge source should be objective and exhaustive. If they wish to participate in the public sphere, they must have the disposition and the capacity to express their ideas and beliefs.
- ii) **Loyalty to democratic values and procedures:** The willingness to adhere to democratic principles supports the entire legal, political, and democratic governance system. Democracy will not function if the participants' worth and loyalty fail.
- iii) **Citizenship identities:** To participate, one must identify oneself as a citizen. The formal perspective of citizenship conceptually denotes political life in a democracy, whereas the social perspective of citizenship conceives citizenship in specific sets of practices and social agency.
- iv) **Respect for fundamental civil and political rights** There must be an appreciation for civil rights and the rights of minority groups, including the notion that fundamental rights can be freely exercised.

#### 14.7.1 Discussion on Components

Renee Hobbs (2010) outlined five core skills for digital media literacy that promote active political engagement and participation through consuming and creating content. These five criteria are considered when Hobbs' elements are applied to the political arena. The skills are:

- i) **Access:** Locating and utilising appropriate media and technological resources to access political information and disseminating pertinent information to others.
- ii) **Analyse and evaluate:** Comprehending information and thinking critically about it to assess its quality, authenticity, reliability, and point of view, as well as the implications or consequences of such information.
- iii) **Create:** Creating or composing content with creativity and self-expression.
- iv) **Reflect:** Consider the application of social responsibility to one's self-identity and communication practices.
- v) **Act:** Participating individually or collectively in the political process at local, regional, national or international levels.



**Figure 14.1: Essential competencies of Digital and Media Literacy (Hobbs, 2010)**

Citizens with political differences can express themselves non-violently in a democracy through participation in political life and empowerment. It is necessary to evaluate the function of media and information literate citizens in information flow. A media and information literate citizen (i) understands the value of information in a democratic society; (ii) is aware of the role of information providers in a democracy; (iii) identifies the source of information; (iv) can evaluate information from any source; (v) knows when and where to share information; and (vii) can communicate effectively with the public.

### 14.7.2 Indian Context

The digital world of mobiles, the Internet, and big data either exacerbates or facilitates the political outcomes of information and communication technologies. Emerging information and communication norms foster nuanced and substantive conversations. Access to, consumption, and dissemination of information among communities has become spontaneous. In addition to the well-known media conglomerates, new organisations such as Google, Microsoft, and Meta assume control over the production of content and the engagement landscape. The new legacy organisations promote the global dissemination of information and communication. As a result, new connective platforms have evolved into a reservoir for sharing information, bringing together individuals who advocate for local, regional, and national causes.

In India, a citizen's ability to take part in the democratic process of their country depends on his or her familiarity with both state and civic issues. Participation in the administrative arena is essential to good governance from the top down. Civic and political knowledge, as well as the ability to shift relevant information from an ocean of information, are crucial for the citizens of India to participate in the political process effectively. National political participation is compromised due to the low MIL skills of its citizens. All citizens should be familiar with the paradox of information and media since it is through the media (print, radio, and online) that we learn about changes in government and society. Critical thinking about political messages and genuine engagement can be fostered by developing media and information

literacy (MIL).

Specifically, marginalised groups such as tribals, women, and religious minorities may benefit from online political participation. This improves prospects for fostering quality in all segments of society, as the Internet provides people from underrepresented groups a platform to share their stories and opinions, making political discourse inclusive. Nonetheless, MIL helps transform skills into valuable functioning, including public engagement in digital forms and using all available online communication channels.

**Activity 2**

Online political information access and analysis

Identify credible sources of online political information and differentiate between reliable news outlets, fact-checking websites, and opinion-based platforms.

**Check Your Progress: 2**

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1. Analyse the concept of the digital public sphere and its relevance in shaping political debates.

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2. Explore the relationship between democracy and digital media.

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3. Evaluate the importance of media and information literacy (MIL) for effective political participation.

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4. Reflect on the ways in which individuals can utilise digital media to influence policy making, evaluate government performance, and promote civic engagement.

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## 14.8 LET US SUM UP

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In this Unit, we discussed the intricate relationship between political participation and digital media. Through this Unit, you have learnt a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of political participation, spanning traditional and digital realms. Also this Unit has explored the dimensions of political engagement, including individual and collective actions, within the context of the digital public sphere. Moreover, this Unit explained the various digital media tools that facilitate political participation, recognizing their role in shaping political debates and influencing democratic processes. It analysed the significance of media and information literacy (MIL) as a prerequisite for effective political engagement, particularly in the Indian context.

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## 14.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

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### Check Your Progress: 1

1. "Political participation" refers to citizens' engagement in activities aimed at influencing public policy and supporting democratic processes. In modern democratic societies, it holds immense significance as it allows individuals to voice their opinions, contribute to decision-making, and hold elected officials accountable. The availability of the Internet has profoundly impacted political participation by expanding access to information, enabling grassroots organising, and fostering online activism. Citizens can now engage in political discourse, campaign for causes, and mobilise support more efficiently through online platforms, thus amplifying their voices and influencing political outcomes.
2. The dimensions of political participation encompass a wide range of activities, including voting, attending rallies, signing petitions, and engaging in political discussions. In both online and offline contexts, these dimensions manifest through various channels. For example, voting occurs offline at polling stations but can also take place online through electronic voting systems. Similarly, while attending political rallies and protests typically happens offline, individuals can also participate in virtual rallies and online campaigns through social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook.
3. Digital media tools play a crucial role in facilitating political engagement by providing platforms for communication, information dissemination, and mobilisation. Social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram enable individuals to connect with like-minded individuals, share political opinions, and organise collective action. Online forums and discussion boards allow for in-depth discussions on political issues, fostering a more informed citizenry. These platforms influence the

dynamics of political participation by amplifying voices, shaping public opinion, and providing a platform for marginalised groups to be heard.

### Check Your Progress: 2

1. The concept of the digital public sphere refers to the online space where individuals engage in public discourse, exchange ideas, and participate in political debates. Digital platforms contribute to the democratisation of discourse by providing accessible and inclusive spaces for individuals to express their opinions, challenge dominant narratives, and hold public figures accountable. The accessibility of digital platforms allows for a diverse range of voices to participate in political discussions, thereby enriching democratic deliberation and fostering civic engagement.
2. The relationship between democracy and digital media is symbiotic, with the digital age information system playing a crucial role in promoting democratic values and principles. Digital media facilitate transparency, accountability, and civic participation by providing access to information, enabling citizens to scrutinise government actions, and fostering public deliberation. Online platforms also empower marginalised groups, amplify diverse voices, and facilitate political organising, thus strengthening democracy and promoting social change.
3. Media and information literacy (MIL) are essential for effective political participation in the digital age. MIL enables individuals to critically evaluate information, discern credible sources, and navigate the complex digital information landscape. Components of MIL include information literacy, which involves evaluating sources and verifying information, media literacy, which entails analysing media messages and understanding their impact, and digital literacy, which involves navigating digital platforms and tools effectively. MIL empowers citizens to make informed decisions, engage meaningfully in political discourse, and resist manipulation and misinformation.
4. Individuals can utilise digital media to influence policy-making, evaluate government performance, and promote civic engagement in various ways. For example, social media campaigns can raise awareness about pressing issues and mobilise support for policy changes. Online petitions and surveys can provide avenues for citizens to voice their concerns and preferences to policymakers. Moreover, digital platforms enable citizens to hold governments accountable by monitoring their actions, sharing information about governance issues, and participating in online discussions about public policies.

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## UNIT 15 FILM GENRES AND STORYTELLING

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### Structure

- 15.0 Introduction
- 15.1 Learning Outcomes
- 15.2 Introduction to Films
  - 15.2.1 Medium of Entertainment
  - 15.2.2 Medium of Communication
  - 15.2.3 Expectations of Audience
- 15.3 Film Grammar
  - 15.3.1 Elements of Storytelling
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- 15.4 What is a Film Genre?
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  - 15.5.1 What is a Script?
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- 15.6 Relevance of Script in Social Media Era
- 15.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 15.8 Keywords
- 15.9 Further Readings
- 15.10 Check Your Progress: Possible Answers

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### 15.0 INTRODUCTION

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The advent of social media platforms has empowered the common Internet users to generate media content in multiple media formats. The affordable data plans and smartphone proliferation added functionality for common Internet users to share various contents online. One popular way of sharing on social media platforms is through visual content - shorts, reels, videos, and streaming. As part of the digital literacy course, this Unit lets us understand the basic grammar of visual media. The film is considered a novelty that borrowed the entertainment components from folk forms and used modern audio-visual technologies to create fantasy in the entertainment sector. Social media visual content is also a mere extension of this evolution of visual entertainment medium. Understanding the film genre would give you a broader perspective on handling the visual content from social media and online platforms.

Do you enjoy watching films? This Unit will introduce you to films as a medium of entertainment and communication. We will cover the aspects of film production, elaborating on how a film is made. We will also discuss different genres of storytelling in films and how they affect not only the content but also film grammar and audience expectations. Lastly, you will be taken through various scripting stages, from ideating to visualising a concept.

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## 15.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

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After completing this Unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the various elements of film grammar;
- Differentiate between film genres;
- Understand the basic concepts behind the writing a script; and
- Know how to create a storyboard.

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## 15.2 INTRODUCTION TO FILMS

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Can you recall sitting in a theatre, excitedly waiting for the lights to go down and the chatter of people to end so the show could begin? And when the lights finally dimmed, trailers from forthcoming features would start playing, and you would be delighted to get something extra than just the film. Finally, when the film begins, you are transported into a world for a few hours, emotionally invested in the characters' lives on screen while simultaneously marvelling at its beauty. You would laugh, cry, be sacred, and even fall in love with the characters on screen. You would go home carrying more than just the story at the film's end. Such has been the experience of watching films on the larger screen, in a theatre.

The film industry is one of the largest industries in the country today, estimated to have a value of 183 Billion INR at the end of 2020. They are the most popular media product of today's time and influence the pop culture to a great extent. From when their screening was limited to the big screen to today when they are readily available on handheld smartphones in everyone's pocket, films have always succeeded in charming their audiences, and the COVID-induced lockdown period adversely affected many industries. Still, the most consumed product during this period was entertainment, especially films, even though the film production industry was also at a standstill. OTT platforms were bringing films and web series worldwide to our homes.

### 15.2.1 Medium of Entertainment

Invented due to a moving image camera, which was initially seen as a novelty, early films were just recordings of regular actions. Slowly, with the aid of narrative, that is, a story told with the help of putting visuals and, later, audio together, films became a popular entertainment medium. Early film-makers started by recording theatre plays so they could be screened around the globe, a feat that earlier had to be achieved by having the entire troupe travel together. Slowly, film-makers started producing their own stories on film as well. Still being an expensive medium of production, initially, those

stories were chosen, and they had a sure shot at success. As a result, traditional folk tales, mythological stories or narratives from religious epics were converted into film scripts then. Gradually, these narratives became more complex and vivid with time, and with it, the masses adapted and accepted the narratives.

Cinema as a medium of entertainment has dominated almost the entire last century. In the olden days, film screenings were held in the open at night, under the star-lit sky, with the help of a projector and a simple white cloth acting as the screen. With theatres opening in the country's hinterland, watching a film on the big screen became a novel experience, limited to new releases or special occasions. When Television was launched, it was widely touted as a replacement for the bigger screen. However, it borrowed content from the films through weekly film screenings, film-based programs, and interviews. With the advent of cable networks, entire channels were devoted to films and filmy music, making cinema even more easily accessible to the public.

Films remain the most popular entertainment medium because they offer something to a wide audience base. Indian movies are packed with drama, romance, action, melodic songs, comedy, and suspense, thus catering to all segments of the audience. Films with such a wide mix of genres are called *masala* films.

### 15.2.2 Medium of Communication

Do you know what fashion trends were common in the 60's? Or do you know what the insides of space stations look like? You would recall scenes from a film to make that mental picture in your head. Right now, you are being asked to recall certain things, but films, like other media products, often subconsciously influence our concepts and thought formulation.

Film producers long ago realised the potential of films to communicate a message to the masses. The popularity and impact of movies have been utilised to discuss many social issues and entertainment. Many relevant issues have been found in the films, ranging from unemployment to gender ratio to the rights of citizens from various quarters. Few such films saw such huge success that they have also been responsible for starting various social rights movements. Candle marches and *dharna* protests became famous due to films like *Rang De Basanti* (2006) and *Lage Raho Munnabhai* (2006).

Films like *Mother India* (1967) and several of Raj Kapoor's films, such as *Shree 420* (1954) and *Jagte Raho* (1956) etc., touched upon issues prevalent in Indian society at that time, such as the empowerment of women and unemployment. Films like these were responsible for spreading awareness about the issue in society and changing the masses' perspective ever so slightly. In recent years, films like *Taare Zameen Par* (2007), *Pink* (2016), and *Toilet Ek Prem Katha* (2017) have been responsible for bringing a sea change in the perspectives of society on the issues of dyslexia, consent and availability of proper sanitation in rural areas of the country respectively.

In times of media trials, where media platforms are widely responsible for

shaping public opinion, films like *No One Killed Jessica* (2011) and *Talwar* (2015) have helped bring relevant judicial cases back to the public's attention. Thus, films have been a powerful medium of mass communication.

**15.2.3 Expectations of Audience**

The film industry heavily depends on the audience's expectations and feedback. If the audience likes a film, the opinion spreads rapidly with word of mouth. The opposite is also true. There have been cases when films with huge budgets, mega-star casts, and interesting themes failed in the ticket window as the audience's reaction was not positive. Film-makers have tried chasing what the audience wants for decades, and scholars and critics have extensively researched and written about it.

When film-makers discover a plot that does extremely well at the box office, they try to rehash it repeatedly by adding and subtracting elements from the storyline or changing the setting. These are called formula films or films set on a basic formula or composition of elements. E.g., the old classical romantic tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, written by Shakespeare, has been remade several times. Films like *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak* (1988), *Ishaqzaade* (2012) and *Ram Leela* (2013) have been based on the same theme, shifting the setting of the story each time but keeping the premise and the end same.

**Activity 1**

Can you identify any other formula in the films? Any storyline or themes that you think are replicated very often?

**Check Your Progress: 1**

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1. What are *masala* films?

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2. What are formula films? How do they cater to the expectations of the audience?

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3. Explain the basic expectations of common users from the reels and shorts of social media?

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## 15.3 FILM GRAMMAR

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### 15.3.1 Elements of Storytelling

All stories follow a basic five-element structure. These five elements are Character, Setting, Goal, Conflict, & Resolution. The character around whom the story revolves is known as the protagonist. At times, the stories could have multiple protagonists, leading to complexity in the narrative. The setting is the environment, time, and place where the story occurs; it could be the medieval ages or a spaceship. The goal is the motivation that drives the protagonist; they could want to rob a bank or woo their romantic interest. Conflict is the roadblock between the goal and the character, adding spice to the story. In a few cases, it could be a person, a situation or, at times, a character's personality. Lastly, resolution is the character's due course to attain their goals. Sometimes, they achieve what they want and sometimes don't. In the latter case, the film is usually classified as a tragedy.

All these elements are tied down with the help of a narrative, which is told with the help of audio and visual elements. A narrative can be defined as a chain of interlinked events. These events are tied mostly to the story's beginning, middle, and end, making up the classical three-act structure. The beginning introduces the characters, setting, goal and conflict. The middle usually shows the impact of the conflict on the characters and them devising ways to solve it. The end culminates the story with the outcome of the struggle and efforts of the characters.

### 15.3.2 Audio Elements

Even when you are sitting alone in a quiet room, is everything ever completely silent? Audio is one of cinema's most underrated and seldom noticed elements and is dominantly seen as a visual medium. Films depend heavily on sound to create a cinematic world, and sound design is a specialised field dealing with the same in film production. It includes planning the audio layout for a particular scene. Four major audio elements are utilised in a film: human voice, music, sound effects and silence.

To begin with, the dialogue is the most important audio element. Imagine two characters whispering in a room full of people; the sound recordist would have to record their conversation in a manner that is louder than the chatter in the room, still sounds like a whisper and make sure that it appears that others cannot hear it. This is achieved by planning the sound design. The choice and placement of microphones to record on-location audio or to dub later are a few of the sound recording crew's choices. Next is the background score. Various instruments are played and recorded to create an ambience for the scene. Think of fast-paced, dramatic music for a car chase or a soft, soothing track to shoot a romantic scene. This music track is aided with the help of sound effects. Sound effects are added sounds to underline action on screen. For example, if you see a character drawing a sword from a sheath, you would expect to hear the sharp rubbing sound of metal against metal. The action doesn't seem real if you don't hear that sound. The last element is silence. You can recall the eerie silence in a horror film when the protagonist



is headed towards the kitchen at midnight or a character not saying anything but conveying a lot with a silent gaze.

Thus, these four audio elements are combined to create a sound design that simultaneously enhances the visuals seen on screen.

### 15.3.3 Visual Elements

Visual elements of a film can be classified into two major categories: Mise-en-scene and cinematography. Mise en scene is a French term roughly translated to putting on scene or frame and deals with all that you can see in a shot. It is mainly handled by the Production Design department, whose task is to create the look of the film based on the script, as per the director's vision. Anything and everything ranging from finding the right shooting location to creating the set or to acquiring the perfect props, the Production design department handles it all. It is aided by the casting department, which hires the actors based on their suitability in the role, while the Costumes, hair and make-up departments help design the actors' look. Thus, when you discuss Yash Chopra's famous romances, everything from the Swiss Alps to Sridevi to the Chiffon sari she is wearing is part of the Mise-en-Scene of the film.

On the other hand, cinematography comprises the creative choices made while shooting the scene. It is purely technical and derives a lot from photography. You may have the most beautiful scenery in front of the camera, but a bad photograph can completely ruin it. Difficult to identify by a regular viewer, this is where film art begins.

The cinematographer starts building the film's look from the most basic elements by the director's vision, starting with choosing the camera, lens, and film stock. Then comes how the camera is handled. The camera placement and angles decide the perspective the shot will take. Imagine the protagonist of the story looking through a peephole. You would automatically expect the next shot to be 'through' the peephole, showing the audience what the actor is seeing. Thus, the camera team must position the camera to get this shot. Next comes the shot size, ranging from an extreme close-up to show the sweat on the brow of the protagonist while trying to focus on a task to an extreme long shot where we can see the actors dancing on the cliff of a mountain. This is followed by camera movement. Think of a car chase sequence. Have you ever noticed that it is usually shot from various perspectives rather than just placing the camera in one place and watching the characters run? You would have a shot from inside the car, noticing the expressions of the driver, a shot from outside, showing the distance between two cars, maybe a close-up of feet pressing on the accelerator, another close-up of the actor looking in the back mirror and so on. All these decisions of choosing the camera placement, angle, movement and shot size help create the film's look and pace.

Next is lighting, which is usually a collaboration between the Production Design and Cinematography teams as it decides what to highlight in a frame and what mood to create. Think of a period drama, and you can't have very sharp light, as major light sources are sunlight or fire in the form of lanterns, candlesticks, or fireplaces. Think of a story set in an office; you would expect

the light to be the cool, fluorescent top light in most corporate offices. Thus, the set design team allows for light fixtures for the same, and the light team places the light sources to light up a shot.

**Check Your Progress: 2**

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1. What are the different audio elements of a film?

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2. What are the five elements of storytelling?

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## 15.4 WHAT IS A FILM GENRE?

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You might be a fan of comedies, love action thrillers, or be inspired by biographical dramas. This means that you prefer watching one genre of film over others. A genre can be defined as a category of films that have thematic and stylistic similarities. It is one way of classifying films in film theory. The genre of the film not only affects its storyline but also impacts the filmmaking style and techniques.

Each genre has its visual grammar, such as dark sets and high contrast lighting for horror. You would take a look at the scene and would be able to guess if it is a horror film or not. This use of film grammar is known as codes and conventions of a particular genre. The genres could be based on the setting, the theme/mood of the film, or the target audience. These genres also help the audience make a viewing decision, as the audience may choose to watch a family drama or a romantic comedy based on their taste and occasion.

### 15.4.1 Types of Genre - Codes and Conventions

Here are a few popular genres and their established and accepted codes.

- **Action:** This film contains fast-paced action, dramatic music, chase sequences, and explosions. The actors are usually trained in martial arts; most films are in fight sequences.
- **Romance:** Based usually on themes of boy meets girl. Soft lighting and light mood are the markers of this type of cinema.
- **Comedy:** The film's plot is intended to make the audience laugh. It could also be combined with other genres, such as romantic comedy or action comedy.
- **Drama** Plays on the emotions of the audience. It contains the highs and

lows of human interaction and can also be divided into many subgenres, such as courtroom drama, Political drama, Historical drama, etc.

- **Adventure:** A narrative that takes the lead characters on a journey or a quest. The story is based on their experiences in an exotic location. It could also have action sequences.
- **Horror:** Narratives that intend to incite fear in the audience. They usually have supernatural elements and fantasy elements.
- **Science fiction**, also known as Sci-fi, relies on the imagination of future technologies and their impact on humanity.
- **Thrillers** are also known as mystery and suspense films because they rely on building suspense in the audience and have some reveal in the end. They could be further classified into psychological thrillers, detective thrillers, etc.
- **Western:** This genre, extremely popular in the West, includes depictions of places far from the reach of the law, where a villain terrorises the people, and the protagonist, who has shades of grey, takes the law into his own hands for justice. The most popular film in Indian cinema, *Sholay* (1975), can be classified in the Western genre.

#### 15.4.2 Stereotypes – Constructing and Deconstructing

As genres are based on formulaic storytelling, they usually have a mix of characters and settings they are identified with. At times, these formulas and bracketing of many generalisations result in stereotypes. These stereotypes could be identified with gender, race, or regional or cultural identities. For example, a film from the romance genre would have actors playing stereotyped gender roles. The heroine would be a damsel in distress, and the hero would save her to win her love. And if and when the girl rejects the hero, he drowns himself in whiskey, *a la Devdas*, a famous character. The hero in any film genre would be a golden-hearted person; it doesn't matter if he is a good or a professional kidnapper. Pick up any film; the protagonist will be an upper-class Hindu male from a Brahmin or Punjabi clan.

Another stereotype related to occupation is connected to the depiction of police officers; they would always be shown to be so dedicated to their jobs that their wives would either be fighting with them, separated or dead. In stereotyping depiction of sexuality, characters who don't belong to either of the genders or are not heterosexuals are usually shown as the butt of the jokes in the narrative. Depicting a cultural stereotype, In a comedy, the hero would always have a friend, played by a Sikh actor, who would mouth Punjabi dialogues and break into *bhangra* at every given chance. Another Muslim character would say salaam or Allah hafiz very frequently. Characters from the southern part of the country would be shown wearing dhotis, with a tilak on the forehead and oiled hair. They would also be eating rice with their hands. Other than the stereotypes portrayed, one would never get to see a tribal character or a character from the northeastern North depicted in the story. Tribals would be portrayed as magical people with powers beyond science's scope if depicted.

These stereotypes limit representation and, thus, inclusion in popular cinema and affect the audience's perception of certain communities, genders, and occupations. This common bracketing also creates a hegemony of the mainstream narrative, which is at times broken by the alternate or parallel cinema movements, if at all.

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## 15.5 FROM SCRIPT TO STORYBOARD

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Producing every film begins with the same step, whether it's a mega-blockbuster or a documentary. The scriptwriters begin with a concept and then do the necessary research to develop it into a story. Only some concepts require more research than others; for example, a film set in a fantasy land or having a location-centric plot would require very little research and more creative imagination. On the other hand, for a biographical or historical piece of fiction, the research team would have to understand the era to situate the narrative.

### 15.5.1 What is a Script?

After the story is in place, the scriptwriters begin writing the script or screenplay. As the word suggests, a screenplay describes what all plays on the screen, from the position and movement of actors to their expressions and, of course, the dialogues. The scriptwriter or the team of scriptwriters compile the entire script and pitch it to the producers. The producers may like the script and decide to put funds in and produce the film, or ask the writers to make a few changes to make it more saleable or discard it altogether. Scriptwriters such as Salim Javed, who used to write scripts together in the 70s, are still recalled as the most successful writer duo as they delivered hit after hit for almost two decades. Many film-makers/directors today, such as Vishal Bhardwaj and Anurag Kashyap, write their scripts.

A film script is a detailed description of the visualisation of action on the screen. It is written scene by scene, as the narrative would play out in the film. It mentions the location and time of the day, describes the set, entry/exit, and other movements of actors, and describes the dialogues they will say with their expressions. There is a set format for writing the script, which is accepted and understood by the entire industry. After all the scenes are written down and the script is compiled, it is sent to various teams for further work. Actors are hired based on reading the script, and they refer to this bound script on the set to rehearse their lines and prepare for their scenes.

### 15.5.2 Using Film Grammar

The most basic element of filmmaking is a shot. The camera person places the camera at a place and decides on a lens, camera angle and movement if required. After much deliberation and consultation with the actors, directors, and sound team, he started shooting. A shot is a single recording from a camera, from the moment it starts till it cuts. After the scripting process, the team starts working on the shot division of the entire script, scene by scene, in consultation with the director and the cinematographer. Shot division is a script breakdown into separate shots for easy shooting. For, if the scene requires the protagonist to enter a room, the shot division could either film

this in one single long shot or cut this down in multiple shots, starting with a close-up of feet, then cutting to a mid-shot of the face, and then finally to the entire body.

When several shots are combined, it creates a scene. Think of a conversation between two characters. It would have several shots, close-ups of both characters and a long shot of the room or their location. The entire conversation is one scene created by combining many shots. Moving further, when many scenes are combined, it results in a narrative or a story. This is the basic film grammar: words are combined to create a sentence, sentences are combined to create a paragraph and paragraphs are combined to create a story.

### 15.5.3 Visualising a Storyboard

After the team compiles a shot division for all the scenes, the storyboard artist starts storyboarding the script. A storyboard is a visual representation of the shots. Artists usually draw storyboards with a lot of visual detail, ranging from the position and movement of the characters in the shot to the set design and the costumes. The production design and camera teams then use these storyboards to plan the shots. Think of a storyboard as a comic book of the film, with less emphasis on dialogues and other audio elements.

Film-makers like Satyajit Ray are famous for their detailed hand-painted storyboards and their resemblance with the final product. Several software applications are available today that make it easy to draw each shot.

#### Check Your Progress: 3

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1. What is a film genre?

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2. What is the need for creating a storyboard? Particularly in the context of contemporary digital social contexts?

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## 15.6 RELEVANCE OF SCRIPT IN SOCIAL MEDIA ERA

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Creating visual content is no longer an expensive exercise. With the advent of social media, reels and shorts have become highly popular among young audiences. A lot of creativity is being experimented with in different

scenarios.

At the core of this course, Digital Media Literacy, social media users need to have a critical understanding of consuming visual content. However, scripting for visual content is a skill required for effective participation in large networks. There are four pillars of the media and information literacy domain, with the fourth pillar describing the participation of media users in communication systems.

The affordability of smartphones and the cost-effective availability of data plans help common users create multimodal communication content (combining various media elements into one single package).

In this scenario, scripting skills help common users convey effective information to a larger audience. In the previous two units, you learned about the opportunities for civic engagement and political participation. Meaningful and socially responsible public communication ensures greater participation and accountability.

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## 15.7 LET US SUM UP

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In this Unit, you learnt to look at films as a discipline and not only as a mode of entertainment. We reviewed the film production process, understanding and appreciating film grammar and how all components work together. We then discussed the different genres of films and the codes and stereotypes they build and break while catering to the audience's expectations. Toward the end, we went over writing a script, from ideating to visualising the entire story as a storyboard.

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## 15.8 KEYWORDS

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**Masala Film** — A film that is a mix of many genres, such as drama, suspense, comedy, romance, etc.

**Formula film** - a mix of all elements that have proven successful at the box office.

**Shot** – The most basic element of filmmaking. An uninterrupted sequence of frames.

**Screenplay** - a description of visual and audio elements on the screen, including the action, expressions, and dialogues.

**Shot division** – breaking down a scene into elements of film grammar

**Storyboard** - A visual representation of the shots.

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## 15.9 FURTHER READINGS

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## 15.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

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### Check Your Progress: 1

1. Films that mix genres, such as romance, suspense, comedy, and musicals, are called *masala* films.
2. A formula film combines all the elements that have proven successful at the box office in the past. Audience feedback helps identify these elements for further use.
3. Common users have several expectations from reels and shorts on social media. Primarily, they seek entertainment through engaging and quick-to-consume content. Relatability is key, as users prefer videos that resonate with their personal experiences, interests, and current trends. Informational value is also important, with users appreciating concise tips, hacks, or educational content. Visually appealing and well-edited videos tend to attract more attention and are more likely to be shared. Authenticity plays a significant role, as genuine content where creators show their real selves fosters trust and stronger connections with viewers. Lastly, users enjoy a diverse range of content, including humour, lifestyle, tutorials, and news, which caters to their varied interests and keeps them coming back for more.

### Check Your Progress: 2

1. A film has four major audio elements: human voice, music, sound effects and silence.
2. The five basic storytelling elements are Character, Setting, Goal, Conflict, & Resolution.

### Check Your Progress: 3

1. A film genre is a broad category of films with thematic and stylistic similarities.
2. A storyboard is a visual representation of the shots used by the production design and camera teams to plan the shooting process.

Creating a storyboard is crucial, particularly in contemporary digital social contexts, as it provides a visual plan that ensures a coherent and logical flow of content. It facilitates efficient communication among team members, making sure everyone is aligned with the vision. Storyboards also enhance time and cost efficiency by identifying potential issues early in the production process, thereby saving resources. In the realm of digital media, engaging storytelling is essential, and storyboards enable creators to plan compelling visuals and narratives that captivate audiences. Additionally, with the diversity of digital platforms, storyboards help tailor content to fit various formats and target audiences, ensuring consistency and effectiveness across different media channels.



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## UNIT 16 ADVERTISING LITERACY

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### Structure

- 16.0 Introduction
- 16.1 Learning Outcomes
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  - 16.2.2 Evolution of Advertising
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- 16.3 Understanding Advertising Literacy
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- 16.5 Advertising Techniques
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  - 16.5.2 Below the Line Advertising
  - 16.5.3 Through the Line Advertising
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  - 16.7.1 Information Processing Model
  - 16.7.2 AIDA and DAGMAR Models
  - 16.7.3 Push and Pull Strategy
  - 16.7.4 What is a Brand?
  - 16.7.5 Slogans, Jingles, Trademarks, Logo, Mascot
  - 16.7.6 USP
- 16.8 The Advertising Management Process
  - 16.8.1 Advertising Strategy
    - 16.8.1.1 Setting Objectives
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    - 16.8.1.4 Selecting Media and Vehicles
  - 16.8.2 Strategy Implementation
  - 16.8.3 Assessing Advertising Effectiveness
- 16.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 16.10 Further Readings
- 16.11 Check Your Progress: Possible Answers

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## 16.0 INTRODUCTION

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Advertising is considered a creative commercial message aimed at selling services or products. It can also be used to increase sales or publicise social messages. It is the lifeblood of the media for their survival. At the same time, there is a general belief that advertising wastes time, money and resources. Audiences of different mass media would generally prefer freedom from advertising, but as advertising students, you must learn to romance with advertising, just as shown in some Indian films. Watch these ads closely and connect with the ad characters, jingle, slogan and advertising locations. When doing this, you connect with the brand emotionally, start loving it, build a long-lasting relationship, adore the brands you purchase, and feel nostalgic.

Besides explaining all about advertisements, this Unit discusses the skills and competencies required to critically analyse intellectually challenging complex ideas presented in a creative and appealing manner. That process is called advertising literacy.

By amalgamating the insights from MNM035—media and information literacy—with the previous units from this course, you will gain a comprehensive understanding of the world of promotion-based advertisements. This holistic knowledge will enhance your professional capabilities and instil confidence in your ability to navigate the complex advertising landscape.

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### 16.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

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After completing this unit, you should be able to:

- Discuss principles and practice of advertising;
- Understand the advantages, objectives and limitations of advertising;
- Help facilitate the use of different media and techniques of advertising;
- Analyse the various appeals used in advertising;
- Apply various advertising concepts and models, and
- Plan and evaluate advertising effectiveness.

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### 16.2 WHAT IS ADVERTISING?

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#### 16.2.1 Definition and Need

One common definition of advertising is "any paid form of non-personal communication of information about products or ideas by an identified sponsor through the media in an effort to persuade or influence behaviour of the people in such a manner as to induce them to buy."

Despite so many other forms of promotion, why do we need advertising? Production is incomplete without consumption. Customers will consume only when they know the product's availability. Advertising fills this gap between production and consumption. Through advertisements, manufacturers draw consumer attention to the product.

## 16.2.2 Evolution of Advertising

You can trace the evolution of advertising in India in the timeline below:

- 1780: James Augustus Hickey started Hickey's Bengal Gazette, the first newspaper published in India. It advertised trade and legal notices. With this, print advertising started. It began with classified advertising.
- 1883: Horlicks became the first brand patented as 'malted milk'.
- 1605: B. Dattaram and Co. started operations in Mumbai, the oldest ad agency.
- 1618: Tata Publicity, the first professionally managed ad agency, was started.
- 1620: Foreign-owned ad agencies entered the Indian market.
- 1629: James Walter Thompson (JWT) ad agency started its India operations.
- 1639: The Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society (IENS) were founded. Lintas' advertising agency was started, and they launched Dalda, the first major example of branding.
- 1645: Advertising Agencies Association of India (AAAI) was started.
- 1648: Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) was founded.
- 1652: The Indian Society of Advertisers was formed.
- 1655: Advertisers' Club of Bombay (ACB) was set up.
- 1659: Telecasting of T.V. programmes commenced.
- 1667: The first commercial was aired on Vividh Bharati, an AIR channel.
- 1670: Sponsored programmes on radio were introduced.
- 1676: Doordarshan (D.D.) was separated from AIR, the first T.V. commercial seen.
- 1682: Bombay Dyeing becomes the first colour T.V. ad.
- 1685: The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) was set up.

## 16.2.3 Advertising, Publicity and Propaganda

What are the similarities and differences among the three of them? Let us have a look at it in the table below:

Advertising	Publicity	Propaganda
Giving information about a company or its products by non-personal means	Giving information about a company or its products by personal and/or personal means	Majorly used as a form of political warfare

Always a commercial transaction, it encourages sales of products, services or ideas.	It may not be a commercial transaction.	It may not be a commercial transaction, but it encourages a change of personal beliefs and values.
The source is always known	The source may not always be known	The source is always known
Always a paid form	It may not always be paid for	It may not always be paid for
All advertising is publicity	All publicity may not be advertising	All advertising may not be propaganda

### 16.2.4 Objectives of Advertising

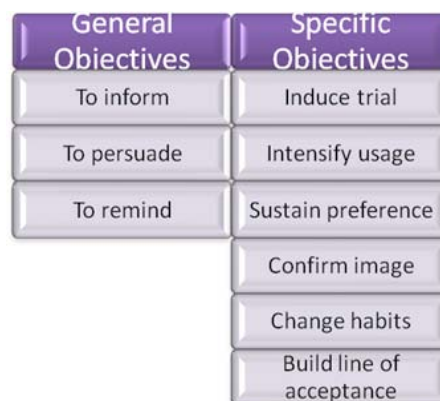
Let us look at the purpose of advertising. Objectives of advertising can be classified broadly into two types, namely:

#### 16.2.4.1 General Objectives

- **To inform:** Done to build primary demand & inform about new product availability. E.g. State Bank of India.
- **To persuade:** The objective is to build demand for a particular brand. For E.g. Vodafone.
- **To remind:** Established products advertise to remind customers about the brand. E.g. Coca Cola.

#### 16.2.4.2 Specific Objectives

- **Induce trial:** Advertisers use it to encourage the customer to try the new product. E.g. Vim gel.



- **Intensify usage:** It is done to get another consumer segment to try the product (mostly established brand). For example, Cadbury targeted older people using Amitabh Bachchan.
- **Sustain preference:** Established brands advertise to maintain their market share. E.g. Seagram's Imperial Blue.

- **Confirm image:** Established brands want to retain their image in customers' minds. For example, see the Nescafe ad.
- **Change habits:** These are used to change target customers' buying or consumption patterns, such as Johnson and Johnson's baby wipes.
- **Build a line of acceptance:** This displays the entire range of brands, e.g., a Videocon ad.

### 16.2.5 Advantages and Limitations of Advertising

Advertising is undoubtedly an inseparable part of the marketing process. Let's look at its benefits for manufacturers and consumers.

#### Pros of advertising for the manufacturer:

- It creates primary demand for the brands and hence results in increased sales.
- After the initial sales, continuous advertising will ensure a steady demand for the brand.
- Increased demand will ensure steady sales, resulting in quicker turnover.
- If the brand is being advertised steadily, then over the years, it will generate consumer goodwill for the brand.
- If the brand's demand is steady in the market, dealers may also show interest in keeping/warehousing it.
- Over the years, manufacturers can sell the goods directly to the consumer, and reduced dependence on middlemen will increase profit as the commission given to these middlemen will be saved.
- Advertising will help salespersons in their sales process by making the brand known to the maximum number of target consumers.

#### Pros of advertising for the consumer:

- Advertisements inform the consumers about product availability.
- As many products are advertised simultaneously, consumers can compare the brands and make a purchase decision. Of course, consumers may not rely on advertisements solely to do so.
- Advertising increases competition among brands. To attract the target consumers, competing brands improve the quality of their products, resulting in better-quality products for consumers.
- By eliminating the middlemen, consumers will enjoy the benefits of reduced prices.
- Consumers who are well-informed about product availability and other details about the brand save time in the purchase decision-making process.
- Latest and upgraded products are advertised, and consumers are persuaded to buy them, improving their living standards.

#### Cons of advertising for the consumer:

- Too many products on offer make consumers end up purchasing them

unnecessarily.

- Advertisements increase the price of the product, making it costlier.
- Most advertisements are exaggerated, false, deceptive, and misleading, thus conveying a wrong notion about the brand.
- Manufacturers with high advertising budgets advertise more, thus sidelining those who cannot afford to spend more on advertising. This results in a brand monopoly, and consumers may not be aware of the non-advertised products.
- Too much sex appeal is used in ads, making them vulgar and demeaning.

**Limitations of advertising:**

- Advertisements can only pull consumers towards the initial sale. If the products are of bad quality, then advertising cannot guarantee sales the second time.
- Advertising can only persuade consumers and not compel them to buy.
- It is a one-way communication, so consumers cannot give feedback.
- Exaggerated forms of advertising make advertisements less believable.

**Check Your Progress: 1**

**Note:** 1) Use the space provided below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1. List three advantages and three disadvantages of advertising for consumers:

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.....  
.....

2. List the general and specific objectives of advertising:

.....  
.....  
.....

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### 16.3 UNDERSTANDING ADVERTISING LITERACY

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In the previous section, you learned the basics of advertising. Let us understand the need for advertising literacy in our routine lives. Remember that whether we are reading a newspaper, watching a television programme, or browsing through mobile apps, all major media ventures are supported by sponsored advertisements. There is an exception: if you subscribe to a specific mobile app, you might not be able to see frequent advertisements, or if you have subscribed to a full-fledged premium OTT platform, you might enjoy the programme without any commercial break. Otherwise, we will be inundated mainly by advertisements. Primarily, these advertisements are a

major source of revenue for media entities. On the other hand, these advertisements are aimed at the audience's mindset to change their interest, preferences or choices. Advertisers use many techniques and tools to attract the audience's attention and further change the audience's perception.

As a regular media user, you need to develop 'advertising literacy skills—the ability to recognise, evaluate and understand advertisements and other commercial messages' (Malmelin, 2010). These skills are crucial in today's media-saturated world. Malmelin devised four dimensions of advertising literacy: informational literacy, aesthetic literacy, rhetorical literacy, and promotional literacy. Each of these dimensions plays a vital role in helping you navigate the complex world of advertising. The conceptual framework of these four dimensions is given in the following table.

*The model and dimensions of advertising literacy*

Literacy	Informational literacy	Visual / Aesthetic literacy	Rhetorical literacy	Promotional literacy
Focus on	Sources of information and knowledge	Aesthetics, design and entertainment	The means and tactics of persuasion	Commercial functions and financial partnerships in the media
What is analysed?	Ability to use various sources of information and to evaluate the correctness of information	Understanding of the forms of auditory and visual expression as well as styles, stories and references	Understanding of the strategies, goals and target groups of marketing	Understanding of the logic of product placement, branded media contents, sponsorship and publicity

The first dimension of Malmelin's advertising literacy model, informational literacy, is particularly relevant in our media-driven world. In Block 3 of this course, we extensively studied the concepts and applications of information literacy. Now, let's apply this to advertising. Informational literacy in the context of advertising refers to your ability as a media user to access and critically analyse the information provided or promoted through advertisements. This skill is crucial for making informed decisions about the products or services advertised.

Aesthetic or visual literacy describes the need to handle high-quality, appealing advertisements that use sophisticated illustrations, whether print advertisements or the visual fantasy of creatively combining audio and visual appeal in television commercials. These visual elements present complex concepts in a simplified manner, and it might be intellectually challenging to decipher their intercultural meanings.

As we mentioned earlier, advertising is all about influencing the behaviour of the audiences. Rhetoric is considered an influencing form of communication used by many, particularly powerful institutions like government, political parties, ideological groups, civil societies, and activists. The same method is being used in various ways by the advertising industry. Media literacy plays a crucial role in empowering the common media audience to critically analyse

all these rhetoric-based influential messages. According to Malmelin, rhetorical literacy focuses on understanding the means of persuasion used in advertising. Rhetorical literacy is the ability to understand different means and strategies of persuasion in advertising and marketing communications in general.

The last dimension of advertising literacy is promotional literacy. By its nature, all advertisements or commercial messages or, for that matter, many public communications are aimed at promoting certain ideas/products/services/ goods, etc. Advertising literacy expects the common media users to be vigilant about these promotional materials and their approaches. Handling those promotional messages equips users to safeguard against the unnecessary influence of powerful messages.

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## **16.4 MEDIA FOR ADVERTISING**

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Advertising is a mediated form of communication; therefore, it reaches consumers through some kind of media. To use these different media optimally, one needs to understand their properties.

### **16.4.1 Print Advertising**

This can be further classified into newspapers, magazines and yellow pages. All these three forms deal with literate people and hence provide the benefit of literate consumers. Newspaper advertisements are one of the oldest and most popular forms of advertising. Newspapers help advertisers reach a large number of audiences. On the downside, it is a costly proposition as it does not give a choice to niche audiences, unlike magazine advertisements. Magazine contents are designed to keep select target readers. Hence, advertisers can also choose target consumers strategically, thus making it costly. Newspapers have limited shelf life, maybe not more than 24 hours, but magazine ads can be viewed repeatedly until the magazines are disposed of. Newspaper paper quality is not very good; hence, the colour reproduction of advertisements is not very good, whereas magazine ads give a better output due to glossy papers.

### **16.4.2 Television Advertising**

This is one of the most popular and dominant media the masses use. It is widely available, helps advertisers reach many audiences quickly, and maximises exposure. Due to its audio-visual feature, consumers can absorb advertisements more quickly and elaborately. On the downside, it does not give a choice to literate audiences, is one of the most expensive media to advertise in and therefore, big businesses enjoy a monopoly. Most ads are 30-45 seconds long, and thus, consumers get limited exposure and time to engage in the communication.

### **16.4.3 Radio Advertising**

Radio is an audio medium, so messages must be designed accordingly. It is less expensive than a TV. Advertising duration is also very short, and audiences are not segmented properly. The possibility of switching channels



is lower compared to TV, as people listen to the radio while engaging in other activities.

#### 16.4.4 Online Advertising and New Media

This is the most recent yet one of the popular media. The Internet is growing daily, and advertising opportunities are also increasing. It can blend print and television media that inexpensively reach unlimited audiences; audiences can be tracked, and messages can be personalised. The audiences of these media are literate and global. They can access more detailed information about the product in a single click. Some social media platforms are Orkut, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Fropper and Ibibo.

#### 16.4.5 Outdoor Advertising

This medium works best when your target customers are not consuming media indoors. Advertisers use different outdoor tools such as hoardings, pole ads, electronic displays, wall paintings, banners, posters, and transit advertising. Transit advertisements are used on buses, trains, and rickshaws. Compared to other media, it is cost-effective, can be easily used in crowded places, and is very flexible when placing advertisements. Since the customers are mobile, longer messages cannot be used in these media and do not give advertisers a choice of audiences.

#### 16.4.6 Other Media

Include direct mail, telemarketing, film advertising, and window display. Catalogues, brochures, sales letters, prospectuses, and others are used through direct mail. Telemarketing and direct mail help reach customers directly and in a personalised manner; the sender controls the message, which can be hidden from the competition. Local products can be best advertised through film advertising. The limitation is film viewers seldom watch these advertisements as they are busy talking. Viewers visit the cinema hall just before the film starts and go out for snacks during the interval when these ads are played.

Window display works best at the point of purchase (POP). Carefully and creatively displayed products often catch customer's attention and create demand for that product. The trick is shopkeepers must.

#### Check Your Progress: 2

**Note:** 1) Use the space provided below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1. Name different media of advertising:

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.....

2. Explain the four dimensions of advertising literacy?

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## 16.5 ADVERTISING TECHNIQUES

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A good advertising technique focuses on society and individuals (potential buyers) in particular while keeping basic communication intact. The key lies in understanding the product, the market, and the customers.

### 16.5.1 Above-the-Line Advertising (ATL)

Advertising is done at the macro level through mass media. It is a conventional and highly impersonal method. ATL uses TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, and outdoor media, which are very expensive. Brands are built through ATL, and then later, with the help of BTL, potential customers are influenced to take action.

### 16.5.2 Below the Line Advertising (BTL)

Is advertising done at the micro level that uses unconventional brand-building techniques and is a direct means of communication? BTL uses public relations, direct mail, sales promotion, personal selling, and various price incentives and promotional offers, e.g. coupons, gift with purchase, competitions, price refunds, and frequent buyer programs. BTL helps break through the advertising clutter and cost-effectively reach target groups (T.G.).

### 16.5.3 Through the Line Advertising (TTL)

Marketers and advertisers now blend traditional advertising techniques such as ATL and BTL to design a customised bouquet in TTL or Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) activities. When marketers combine both techniques, they cross the line, hence the term TTL.

### Check Your Progress: 3

**Note:** 1) Use the space provided below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1. Expand the following:
  - a. ATL
  - b. BTL
  - c. TTL
2. What do you mean by IMC?

.....  
.....  
.....

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## 16.6 DIFFERENT TYPES OF ADVERTISING APPEALS

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Ads carry an appeal and communicate with the audiences through them. These appeals work at the subconscious level of the customers. Appeals are distinctive claims of an advertisement advertisers use to emphasise product features and attract customer attention. They can be broadly categorised as emotional and rational. These appeals can be further classified as:

- **Fear appeal:** Uses moderate fear to position the product's work, especially for products such as insurance, cosmetics, fairness cream, etc. For example, in the Himalaya Neem face wash advertisement,
- **Humour appeal** is commonly used and has high ad recall, as it catches the audience's attention quickly. For example, Emami Fair and Handsome Cream feature a well-known film actor.
- **Music appeal:** Music has inherent value that helps capture the audience's attention. For example, the Lux advertisement song (*Bekabu*) features Shahrukh Khan and Katrina Kaif.
- **Sex appeal:** Sensuality raises audience curiosity, but it needs to be strategically used. Improper usage may result in negative effects and may make your ad look vulgar. E.g. Wild stone deodorant advertisement.
- **Masculine, feminine appeal** emphasises product features that will be imparted to the consumer when he/she starts using your product. E.g. Hero Glamour ad.
- **Scarcity appeal:** It is often used to announce promotional and limited-time offers, Such as the Nano special edition.
- **Adventure appeal:** Advertisers associate product features and usage with fun and adventure and emphasise that customers' lives will change drastically after using the product, E.g., Mountain Dew.
- **Bandwagon appeal:** It focuses on peer pressure. Since 'everybody is consuming a particular product, you should too,' the theme of such ads is 'everybody is consuming a particular product, you should too.' For Example, the Airtel advertisement.
- **Testimonial appeal:** Here, satisfied customers talk about the product's good qualities and share their positive experiences. For example, all Dove soap ads use this technique. They have used the same technique to launch the new hair oil Dove Elixir.
- **Slice-of-life appeal:** The advertisement shows a real-life problem the customer faces that can be solved using the advertiser's product, e.g., the Harpic ad.
- **Snob appeal:** This creates a feeling of desire and envy for products associated with luxury and elegance. E.g. Volkswagen Polo and Vento ads.
- **Weasel words appeal:** Advertisers here claim that their product is the best, but the claim is superficial and ambiguous. E.g., Kellogg's special K

### Check Your Progress: 4

- Note:** 1) Use the space provided below for your answers.  
2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

#### Fill in the blanks:

- The appeal is often used to announce promotional and limited-time period offers.
- When the ad shows a real-life problem the customer faces that can be solved using the advertiser's product, it uses appeal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ appeal focuses on peer pressure.
- Advertisers associate product features and usage with fun and adventure to appeal to customers and emphasise that customers' lives will change drastically after using the product.
- When advertisers claim that their product is the best, even though the claim is superficial and ambiguous, it is called appeal.

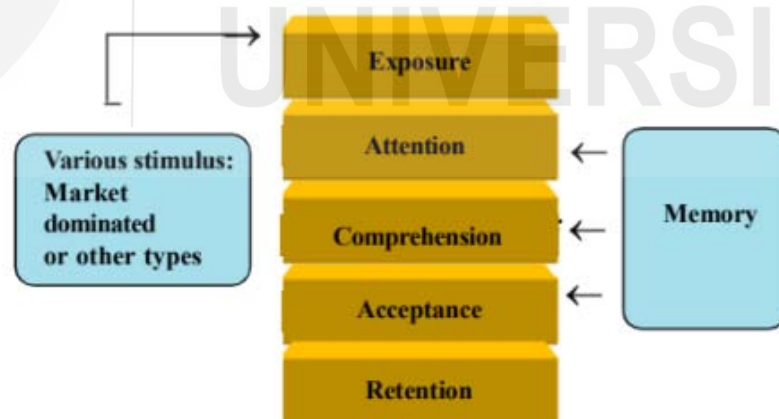
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## 16.7 ADVERTISING COMMUNICATIONS: BASIC CONCEPTS

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### 16.7.1 Information Processing Model (IPM)

In the 1640s, William McGuire prepared this model and connected it to the concept of persuasion in ad effectiveness. IPM essentially discusses the behaviour and attitudinal changes in response to persuasive communication. Let us have a look at the outline of the model:



The above diagram explains information processing in five steps.

- Exposure:** All market players simultaneously expose customers randomly to brand-related information through various media and non-media activities. The objective is to inform them about the product attributes.
- Attention:** Customers choose their ad message based on their interests. Here, marketers face the challenge of attracting T.G.'s attention in a limited period.

- **Comprehension:** Customers will develop an understanding of the brand based on selective attention and interest areas. This is the stage at which T.G. is curious about the brand and wants to know more about it.
- **Acceptance:** Out of the various shortlisted choices, customers accept a particular brand and reject another. This acceptance does not ensure that the decision will remain so forever, and such scepticism can change their decision.
- **Retention:** In this phase, disbelief strengthens belief, and customers adhere to their decisions. Consumers are more determined to continue with the shortlisted brand.

Most importantly, when information travels through these five stages, various stimuli, generally marketer—and advertiser-dominated, must reach through them to create a long-term memory. Memory plays an important role, especially at stages two, three, and four.

### 16.7.2 AIDA and DAGMAR Models

AIDA and DAGMAR are two models of consumer response to advertising and marketing activities. The AIDA model organises the response into four stages, namely:

- **Attention:** Here, advertisers encourage the audience to hear the main idea of the advertisement. This is the first step to response; consumers' attention must be captured by emphasising the product's strong features, a genuine solution to the problem, the promise of savings through discounts, etc. and by providing any common angle that can attract consumer attention. E.g. Lifebuoy hand wash advertisement.
- **Interest:** Once the attention is captured, further interest is generated in the customer's mind, and a more detailed picture of the message is painted—for example, the MamyPoko pants advertisement.
- **Desire:** It helps customers embrace the central idea by explaining how the change will benefit them—E.g. Fortune Rice Bran Oil advertisement.
- **Action:** The advertisement suggests the action advertisers want consumers to take—for example, the Fair and Lovely fairness cream and face wash advertisement featuring Yami Gautam. In 1661, Russel Colley proposed the DAGMAR model. It is expanded to define advertising goals for measured advertising results. As per this model, consumers' purchase decision goes through four stages, namely:
- **Awareness:** Consumers must first know the brand and company's existence and availability. Once this awareness is attained, companies must use it immediately—for example, JustDial.com endorsements by Amitabh Bachchan.
- **Comprehension:** Here, advertisers must focus on product benefits and give a deeper understanding of the product. For example, in the Colgate Super Flexi advertisement,
- **Conviction:** At this stage, ads must build confidence in the customers' minds so they are compelled to buy the product—E.g. Sugarfree Natura

- **Action:** In this, the focus is on buying, and therefore, ads emphasise the benefits of customers' purchases—for example, Godrej Ezee's advertisement.

### 16.7.3 Push and Pull Strategy

These are two main types of promotional strategy. In the push strategy, the producer lures wholesalers and retailers in the form of trade shows, direct selling, subsidies, high commission rates, POP displays and others to stock their products and push them towards the customer, as explained in the figure below:



Customers may not experience the push strategy as it is directed towards distributors, whereas the pull strategy aims at the end customer. Through various promotional strategies such as advertising, word of mouth, etc., the product is pulled through the channel by customer demand, as explained below:



The push strategy is comparatively more interactive and works best in impulse-buying product categories. Companies generally combine both strategies to increase sales.

### 16.7.4 What is a Brand?

A positive brand image is a valuable asset of the company. Brands are the product's visual identity in the form of logo, colour, labelling, name, tagline, shapes, and graphics. It helps customers identify brand 'A' versus brand 'B'. The branding process is creating a unique brand name and position in the market through advertising and marketing campaigns. A good brand name must be unique, easy to pronounce, identifiable, have recall value, talk about the product's qualities and benefits, have legal protection, and not have wrong meanings associated with that word, especially when extending to another market.

### 16.7.5 Slogans, Jingles, Trademarks, Logo, and Mascot

These are important ingredients of the branding process and distinguish a company from its competition. A well-designed logo enhances brand value, gives a unique identity to the product, must be easily recognisable, builds trust, makes the product look more professional, and helps consumers associate the brand with the company.

A slogan is a watchword, short, catchy phrase or motto used in advertising,

generally along with the logo. It is one of the most appealing tools to be used in the branding process and is often called the brand's fingerprint. It connects consumers with the brand and can change their perception. Slogans may change depending on the campaign. For Coca-Cola, its slogans are quite often changing. In the 2000s, their 'Thanda Matlab Coca-Cola' campaign with Amir Khan was worth noticing. In 2012, they launched their 'Open Happiness' campaign with Coke. In between, they had three more slogans, namely 'Piyo Sar Uthake', 'Jo Chaheho Jaye Coca-Cola Enjoy' and 'Burrrrrr'.

Slogans are sometimes paired with jingles, a short tune used in advertising. Like slogans, jingles must be catchy and memorable and create familiarity and desire for the product. Many of us hear a jingle on the radio or television, and it gets into our heads, and the effect is long-lasting. Jingles are one of the classic examples of sound branding.

Many times, companies also use mascots in advertising campaigns. Mascots are a highly visible part of the brand and can take the advertising campaign to the next level. They give the brand a personality. While designing mascots, one has to ensure that the image is associated with the brand image.

The most important legal shield for brands is trademarks. These can be symbols, logos, words, or slogans. Companies register them and create ownership and exclusive rights to use them. Companies may extend trademark protection to packaging, colours, numerals, shape of goods, smell, sound, movement, and holograms. It is anything that distinguishes one company's goods from another. Anybody who infringes them can be taken to court.

### 16.7.6 USP

Unique Selling Proposition or Unique Selling Point is a marketing concept which Rosser Reeves introduced. It can be a real or perceived benefit that customers seek from the product more than that of its competitor. The purpose of having a USP is that the target audience must be convinced of the reason to buy a product. This proposition must be something other marketers have not yet claimed; only your product is offered or claimed to be offered first. Generally, the advertising campaign is built around USP.

#### Check Your Progress: 5

**Note:** 1) Use the space provided below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1. What are the steps involved in the information processing model:

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 .....  
 .....

2. What is USP?

.....

.....  
.....  
3. Expand AIDA and DAGMAR:

.....  
.....  
4. What do you mean by brand?

.....  
.....  
5. Fill in the blanks:

- a. A well-designed logo enhances the \_\_\_\_\_ and gives a unique identity to the product.
- b. \_\_\_\_\_ is a watchword, short, catchy phrase, or motto used in advertising, generally along with the logo.
- c. A short tune used in advertising is called \_\_\_\_\_.
- d. While designing mascots, one has to ensure that the image is happy and \_\_\_\_\_ colours are used.
- e. \_\_\_\_\_ provides legal shield to the brands.

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## 16.8 THE ADVERTISING MANAGEMENT PROCESS

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### 16.8.1 Advertising Strategy

A company's advertising strategy should always support its marketing strategy and the company plans. When doing strategic planning, advertisers need to be creative and flexible. A rigid strategy may often lead to loss of market share. One may use push or pull techniques to set the strategies depending on the business's goals. Strategic planning goes through the following steps:

#### 16.8.1.1 Setting Objectives

The first and foremost step in strategic planning is setting objectives. Objectives are statements that explain what needs to be attained by taking advantage of opportunities and overcoming any barriers. When setting objectives, advertisers need to understand the goal of the campaign. Depending on the company's goals, objectives can be short-term or long-term. Short-term objectives focus on customers' actions, i.e., on the purchase, and long-term objectives focus on change in brand attitude. These objectives are further classified as direct and indirect.

Direct objectives focus on increased sales, new distribution channel development, and profitability, whereas indirect objectives focus on changing attitudes and increasing awareness.



### 16.8.1.2 Formulating Budget

The advertising budget is one of the important components of the marketing budget. Advertisers must first analyse the expected results and only invest in any campaign. Campaign goals and objectives must be first determined, and the budget should be set accordingly. A well-planned budget helps in the effective utilisation of funds and avoids wastage. There are different techniques for setting the ad budget, which are discussed below:

- Based on previous years' expenditure on advertising.
- Percentage of sales technique: here, advertisers assess the annual sales and then set a budget.
- The advertisers set an equal budget at par with the competition, meaning whatever the competition spends is equal to the advertisers' budget.
- In an objective-based budget, advertisers first consider the available funds and cut the number of objectives or prioritise them according to the existing funds.

### 16.8.1.3 Creating Advertising Messages

Designing an advertising message is considered the most creative part of the campaign. Creativity has no limitations; therefore, messages can be designed in multiple ways beyond imagination. One has to take cues from the objectives to write a precise message.

### 16.8.1.4 Selecting Media and Vehicles

Selecting media and vehicles is also known as 'media scheduling'. It is a strategic process where media planners do a lot of research before making final decisions.

The key here is to choose the most cost-effective media to reach the focused target audience. Media planners make a 'media mix' as their customised recipes when needs arise. Media mix simply means the right combination of each medium to reach its target audiences. The choice of media can be from print (newspapers, magazines and direct mail) and electronic media (radio, television, and Internet). While preparing media mix, one has to check these simple tips:

- Optimum utilisation of your resources: Try to make a mix that will reach as large an audience as possible while reducing wastage.
- Reach with high frequency: Constantly making your presence felt will have a high register and recall value.
- Know your customer: Understand his/her media consumption for better reach.
- Do your homework: Research well before going on the floor. The duration and timing of the advertising campaign need to be strategically planned for campaign success. Check reach and coverage, the cost of the media vehicles, the nature of your product, business goals, campaign goals, and your audience profile.

- More money spent will not always ensure the success of the advertising campaign.
- Negotiate with media houses for competitive prices.

### 16.8.2 Strategy Implementation

Once an effective plan is made, it needs to be carefully executed, and that is when strategic implementation comes into the picture. Any organisation is people-oriented, and any strategy cannot be executed without the active involvement of the organisation's employees. The second step is to assess the budget requirements and match them with strategy implementation. Then, assign roles and responsibilities to designated people and, most importantly, give them deadlines. Put simply, have a meticulous communication plan ready before implementation.

### 16.8.3 Assessing Advertising Effectiveness

Measuring and evaluating advertising effectiveness is extremely important not only for the current campaign but also gives direction for all future campaigns. The ultimate goal of any advertising is to assist the sales team in increasing sales or help the marketing team increase brand awareness. This is measured by calculating R3: Reach, resonance and reaction. Reach is the penetration of your advertisement amongst your target audience. Resonance will tell you how effectively and qualitatively you have reached them. Reaction is how your target responds to your message.

#### Check Your Progress: 6

**Note:** 1) Use the space provided below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1. Name different types of advertising budget settings.

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2. What is media mix?

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3. R3 stands for:

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## 16.9 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit, we discussed the basic principles and practices of advertising. We learned about key concepts commonly used in the advertising business and tried to learn about the prime objectives, advantages, and limitations of advertising.

Advertising cannot reach people without mass media tools, so we reviewed various media vehicles and examined their strengths and weaknesses. We also learned about the techniques and appeals used in ads to understand advertising in depth.

We tried discussing a few important advertising models followed by the advertising management process, which gave us an overview of strategy planning, setting a budget, implementing, and assessing effectiveness.

Through these basic dimensions of advertising, you should be able to glance through various forms of promotional and commercial advertising contents in a critical manner.

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## 16.10 FURTHER READINGS

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## 16.11 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

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### Check Your Progress: 1

1. A. Three advantages of advertising to customers are that it informs about product availability, helps customers make purchase decisions, and improves their standard of living.  
B. Three disadvantages of advertising are that customers purchase unnecessarily, it increases product price, and advertisements may be false and misleading.
2. A. General objectives are to inform, to persuade and to remind.  
B. The objectives are to induce trial, intensify usage, sustain preference, confirm image, change habits, and build a line of acceptance.

### Check Your Progress: 2

1. Print, television, radio, online and new media, outdoor, direct mail, telemarketing, film, and window display.
2. Understanding advertising literacy involves grasping four key dimensions: informational literacy, aesthetic literacy, rhetoric literacy, and promotional literacy. Informational literacy pertains to the ability to discern the accuracy and relevance of the information presented in advertisements. Aesthetic literacy involves analysing the visual and sensory aspects of advertisements, including design elements and emotional appeals. Rhetoric literacy focuses on recognizing the persuasive techniques used in advertisements, such as persuasion through language and imagery. Lastly, promotional literacy involves understanding the economic motives behind advertisements, including recognizing when an advertisement aims to sell a product or influence consumer behaviour. By comprehending these dimensions, individuals can critically evaluate advertisements and make informed decisions as consumers.

### Check Your Progress: 3

1. (a) Above the Line (b) Below the Line (c) Through the Line
2. In Integrated marketing communication campaigns, marketers blend both above-the-line and below-the-line techniques, i.e. they use mass media tools along with public relations, direct mail, sales promotions and personal selling to reach their target customers.

### Check Your Progress: 4

- A. Scarcity
- B. Slice of life
- C. Bandwagon
- D. Adventure
- E. Weasel words

**Check Your Progress: 5**

1. Exposure, attention, comprehension, acceptance, retention.
2. Unique Selling Proposition is a marketing concept which can be a real or perceived benefit that customers seek from the product compared to its competitors and the target customers must be convinced of the proposition to buy the product.
3. AIDA stands for Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action, and DAGMAR stands for Defining Advertising Goals for Measured Advertising Results.
4. A brand is a name, term, design, symbol, or combination intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and differentiate them from competitors.
5. (a) Brand value (b) Slogan (c) Jingle (d) Bright (e) Trademarks

**Check Your Progress 6**

1. Based on previous years' advertising expenditures, the percentage of sales technique is at par with the competition, and the budget is objective-based.
2. The right combination of media to reach the target audience.
3. Reach, resonance and reaction.

